A

DISCOURSE

OF

FAITH:

SHEWING

The Nature of True Faith, and whether it be Strong or Weak. ~~The First in its Life and Vigor. The Second in its Objections, which are Answered,~~ With Cautions and Directions to strengthen and increase it.

By a Dying Divine: who till death desires to Live of Life of Faith

---

And Published by his Friends at the Request of his Late Parishioners.

LONDON:

Printed for *Tho. Cockerill*, at the *Three Legs* in the *Poultrey*, over-against the *Stocks-Market*. 1688.

J Raine,

York, May 1869.

The author of this rare book was Matthew Robinson, rector of Burneston

In Mr Corser's catalogue Pt III, Aug. 1869 was this.

695. Robinson (Matthaei) Strena Poetica (Paraphrasis poetica in Cantica Canticorum) Autograph Manuscript. 12mo 1646-67.

∴ M Robinson, it appears from an autograph note, of George (? Thos) Baker, was a native of Durham, & admitted as Fellow of St John's College Cambridge 3 April 1650. On the last leaf is written a Matthew Robinson's New yeares gift. The work is dedicated to Z. C. (Zachary Cost?) in Latin & English Verses.

These For my Reuerend Brother Mr Richard Tatham. all Kirklington

In my Languishment, when feeble both as to my outward and inward man, these few Sermons were lately composed & preached by mee with respect unto mine own condition. And though they were the weakly Issue of a weaker parent (as judicious persons may too well perceive) yet many of my Christian friends & Hearers (some whereof are lately translated to a more blessed Communion) desired earnestly that they might be published: But importunities of this nature I ever have resisted. Others desired my Sermon Notes, & I could not deny unto my Brother, the Coppy of these Sermons; which travelling to London I perceive hath been communicated to many worthy hands, & at last is got forth into publick. Since it soe proveth, I must not disown mine own weakness, But must say, What I have written, I have written. And mine Apology shall be onely that of Davids I believe therefore have I spoken; And though others have printed this small Book, none ought to have a better Right in disposing of it to my dear friends, though I cannot commend it unto any of them: And if it conduce to the Comfort and confirmation of any of them, who may complaine of inward weakness, I shall be much refreshed and thereunto add my prayers, desireing to be repayed in kind, by the prayers of all who love my Lord and mee his most unworthy Servant & theirs.

JR

A

DISCOURSE

OF

FAITH:

SHEWING

The Nature of True Faith, and whether it be Strong or Weak. ~~The First in its Life and Vigor. The Second in its Objections, which are Answered.~~ With Cautions and Directions to strengthen and increase it.

By a Dying Divine. who sent death defiers to Lord of Life of Faith

And Published by his Friends at the Request of his Late Parishioners.

LONDON:

Printed for *Tho. Cockerill*, at the *Three Legs* in the *Poultrey*, over-against the *Stocks-Market*. 1688.

THE PREFACE OF THE PUBLISHER TO THE READER.

Christian Reader,

THAT *here thou* readeſt *what I and ſome others have* heard, *thou oweſt not to the* Ambition *or* Popularity *of the* Preacher, *who more* prided *himſelf in Privacy, (his Genius being delighted moſt in* Shades); *nor could that* Popular Air *yield other than* cold Comfort *to one* breath-

ing out his laſt; *but to the Devotion and Importunity of his Deareſt* Friends *the* Hearers, *who were more willing to wind their Dead in* Woollen, *than* bury *with them their* Winding Sheets; *for ſuch are theſe of Paper to be reputed. The Author, indeed, did* calculate *theſe for his own* Place *and* People, *yet they may indifferently ſerve to any other* Meridian *of Chriſtians, tho under an higher* Elevation; *the* homelier *and leſs* Modiſh-Dreſs (*like to that of Damſels* quæ ſibi ornantur) *may ſhew that the Parent never deſigned this little* one *to go* abroad; *for he uſed to ſay of his* Virgin-*Papers, which others courted him for, That* (*contrary to the vogue touching modeſt* Maids) *thoſe of his might be heard and not ſeen: And he accounted it a kind of* Proſtitution *to* expoſe *ſuch, and make them* common.

Let none move Herod's Queſtion, *Luke* 9. 9. Who is this, of whom I hear theſe things? *but fall on the Book rather, and eat it,*

it, making no queſtion. The Author's Name is Anonymous, *not to be found in the Title Page,* quære alibi, *in the Lamb's Book; for his Name will* live *by more* coſtly *and laſting* Monuments *than theſe of Paper, when he is Dead; nor did that admired Author of the* Whole Duty of Man, *with more modeſty and induſtry hide himſelf, ſo that none could find him, than did our Friend, who knew well* Pone ſe latere, *to* hide himſelf behind himſelf; *and yet after all, he might bear St.* Paul's Cogniſance *and* Motto, 2 *Cor.* 6. 9. As unknown, but well known; *for he was indeed* Paucis notus, *but* paucioribus ignotus, *as was ſaid of another Divine.*

And ſince the Title Page *denieth thee his Name, expect not from ſuch an one that greater vanity of* Picture *in the* Frontiſpiece; *though he bore ſome* Features *ſo remarkable, that the moſt Private* Pencil *of any who knew him, could draw him like, and to the life; for*

this Perſon unknown, was univerſally known, and read in Men, Books and Buſineſs, by his own and others concerns; and a ſtranger he was to few of the Liberal or Learned Arts, as his many Miſcellanious Manuſcripts, *both in the* ſofter *and* ſeverer Sciences *will evidence; but his* Darling *was* Divinity, *as his* Proper Province; *to which in his declining days he was wholly devoted, and in which as much admired for ſubſtantial and practical Preaching. Thus like* Cajetan, *his ſetting-Sun looked biggeſt; for quitting the buſtle of Buſineſs, and Polemical Studies, he wholly applied himſelf to the Expoſition of the Holy Scriptures; as that Divine Phyſician* (*before him*) Marcilius Ficinus *having Writ* de Sanitate Tuenda, *and then* de Valetudine Reſtituenda, *concluded his Courſe by Writing his Book* de Vita Cœlitus Comparanda.

Our Eccleſiaſtes *or Preacher, knew as well as moſt to lap his Talent in* clean Linen, *and wrap it in the* Fineſt Napkin *of pure Language, but this* (*with St.* Paul) *he lightly eſteemed*

of,

of, being not the Talent of a Text-man; *and not as do ſome modern men, who by* Diapering *and* Damasking *their thinner Diſcourſes with Flowers of finer* Engliſh, *have learned the late Politicians* knack *to* Preach *and ſay* nothing; *but our Author pitied much their Province which laid in elaborate Periods, much better becoming the Desk than the Pulpit; well knowing that more admired* Caſtellio *the* Orator, *than him the* Divine, *in making the Goſpel* purum putum Ciceronianum.

The Orb *wherein he was fixed, was but a ſmall one, but it pleaſed him, becauſe his own; and though he wanted not great Fortunes to have raiſed him higher, nor greater* Friends *to have made him* great, *ſome whereof freely proffered him great* Parſonages, *yet never would he accept; not approving* Plurality *nor* Polygamy; *and therefore choſe rather to beſtow ſome good Livings on Pious Preachers, than to receive any, holding to his own Church that was his firſt Choice; for heaping* Pelion *on* Oſſa (*he ſaid*) *would make*

no

no man's Aſcent to Heaven the eaſier.

His Principles were not only Loyal, but Pure, Peaceable and Charitable, both as to the Hand Charity *in giving, and that Head and Heart-*Charity *in Judging; for he had a tender Regard and Pity for* Diſſenters *of reputed Piety, deteſting Perſecution, with all Sanguinary Laws and Severities which touched Conſcience; and many more ('tis hoped) by this time of the day are of his mind. Nay, though he was a Reſolved Proteſtant, he ever held a fair and moſt amicable Correſpondence with many of the* Romiſh *Comunion; in Converſing with whom there needed no* Caſſander *to compromize their differences; ſome of theſe he held in high eſteem for true Worth and Integrity, and he was as really eſteemed of them; ſo that even ſome of thoſe of High and Noble Character, will do Honour to his Duſt. And ſure that Faith biddeth faireſt for the true Catholick Faith, which is complexioned with a Catholick Charity, ſince* Faith *works by* Love. *His*

His Academical Delights (whilſt Fellow *of a* College*) were in Critical Studies; and he was one of the* firſt *who did animate and encourage (both with his* Purſe *and* Papers*) Mr.* Pool *to undertake that Voluminous Task; yet was ſorry, that wanting Aſſiſtance to collect for him many* Miſcellaneous Criticiſms *occaſionally ſcattered in other Authors, he left many better things behind him than thoſe he found. And as the Noble* Theban *once ſaid to his* Citizens, *bemoaning his dying without Children,* I ſhall leave you my two Daughters *(*Victoria *and* Victorina *we'l ſuppoſe) or meaning rather* Leuctra *and* Mantinea, *to perpetuate his Name to* Poſterity; *ſo this our Worthy, dying, will leave behind him two of* his *much deſired, the one* His Judicious and Critical Reſolutions upon the Whole Bible *in two Volumes, which are well* filled *as to* Matter, *but not ſo* fitted *as to* Order, *and may want his laſt hand; The other his* Practical Theology, *contained in many particular*

particular Treatiſes upon particular Texts of Scripture, Sermon-wiſe; *amounting to two Volumes more; the moſt of which are compleat, wanting only a faithful* Baruck *to tranſcribe them fairly.*

And if theſe few Sermons, of many more, and thoſe more accurately compoſed in Health, have taken place of their Betters, and have gone out upon the forlorn hope of this Publick Adventure, it is not becauſe they are the very beſt, *but becauſe the* very laſt; *and therefore theſe* laſt are the firſt. *The laſt words of Dying Men uſually making the deepeſt impreſſions; and the Blood which floweth from the heart is the pureſt and moſt replete of* Vital Spirits. *However theſe were received as Oracles by thoſe that heard them, being* oracularly delivered ex Tripode, *for the Preacher was not able to* ſtand, *but* ſit *in the Pulpit, to his grief, that he ſhould not verify Biſhop* Jewel's *ſaying of a* Preacher *in* dying ſtanding; *and herein he was* Paſtor mortuus

tuus magis quam emeritus. *If the Language (Reader) ſeem to thee Languid, remember the* Parent *himſelf was Languiſhing; and the Child may well inherit his Infirmities; and yet ſome after all, may ſay that our* Moſes *was a man mighty in words and things; and as for my own part, this is mine* Apology *for the Publication of theſe Papers, That all might have condemned me, if I had ſtifled a living-Birth; and others might have* ſpit in my face, *if I had not been aſſiſting to the* raiſing up Seed *to my* neareſt Kinſman. *But for the reſt, do not expect that they will* follow, *or forſake their Father, until firſt they have* buryed their dead; *then probably the poor Orphans ſo long ſhut up, may get abroad; and if thou deſireſt* (Devout Reader) *to ſee any more of this ſtrain,* Pray, Pray *earneſtly for his deſired* Reſt *and* Repoſe; *ſo thou and he both may have your longings.*

The

The Perſon who did ſo much increaſe his other Talents in the World, did much more yet improve his precious Talent of Time; for he who conſidereth what time he did neceſſarily ſpend *in Conſtant* Preaching, *and in his own and others Affairs, would wonder that he could* ſave *ſo much* ſpare *time on Books, in reading and in writing; of which this is the true and ſhort Account; he never was idle, but read* currente oculo, *and writ* currente calamo, *as few indeed could read, of which this Treatiſe is an Inſtance; it was not like* Jonah's *Gourd, the Son of one day, but it was* partus unius ſeptimanæ (*not* ſeptimeſtris) *his* Six-days Work; *for the* Creation *of it was begun of nothing, and perfected in one* Week, *when Pains were preſſing upon the* Patient: *And as* Alexander, *that nimble Goat in* Daniel, *ſo ſoon skipped over the Earth, conquering all before him: ſo did our* Author *in a few years run over a* World *of* Books *and*

Learn-

Learning, *making all his own. But I detain thee with these words from better things: therefore* (Christian Reader) Read, *and thou wilt be satisfied*, That all is not told thee.

Farewel.

G. Go

A DISCOURSE OF FAITH:

SHEWING The Nature of True Faith, &c.

Luke XVII. 5.

The Apoſtles ſaid to the Lord, Increaſe our faith.

SECTION I.

AS Chriſt is a Chriſtian's *All*, 'tis Faith that makes him *All* in *All*; without which God, the Word, nay, the Word of God, can profit nothing at all, *Heb.* 4. 2. So that

Faith is that Figure, in the firſt place, which ſo highly enhanceth the account of all our Graces; without which all are Cyphers and inſignificant: It is the Mother, the Queen Regent of all thoſe Maids of Honour that attend her: It is not only the *Vnum neceſſarium*, but the *Vnicum* of a Chriſtian (as our Saviour's words import, *Mark* 5. 36. *only believe*). And as the Great Orator once made Elocution the Firſt, Second, and Third part of his Faculty; ſo Faith, it is *omne Punctum*, or every Point in our Chriſtian Profeſſion; And in the Soul's *Repaſt* it is both firſt, ſecond, and third *Courſe*. Therefore it is that Satan (the Arch-enemy of our ſalvation) planteth all his Batteries to ſtorm this Royal Fort of Faith, as if he were minded (with that *Syrian* Prince) not to fight againſt ſmall or great, but the very chief, 1. *Kings* 22. 31. Witneſs his various attempts againſt the Doctrine of Faith, in thoſe multiplied Hereſies, for the ſubverſion thereof, by poyſoning the very Fountain; and no leſs his Attacks againſt the Acts, Exerciſe, Comforts, Senſe, and Growth of Faith. And there-

therefore it is but ſeaſonable ſuccour to play the *Engineer* in fortifying that feeble part; and the *Carpenter*, in repairing thoſe *Breaches* which the *Horns* of his *Battering-Rams* have made. And there is yet one more preſſing *thought* in theſe my preſent *thoughts* and meditations; For little do *living* men conſider what it is that *dying* men will one day moſtly want; and how hard a thing it is for a frail ſoul, in a frailer body, with a feeble Faith, to encounter *ſtrong* and laſting Pains, and that Prince of Fears, the terrible of terribles, the laſt Enemy to be ſubdued, *Death*; or for one dying, to endure *Deaths* often, who hath nothing but Faith to *live* upon.

The occaſion of theſe words is preſented to our view, e're we enter, in the words immediately foregoing the Text, where our Saviour preſſeth the Grace of Charity, and that difficult duty of forgiving our offending Brethren, *toties quoties*, not to ſeven times a day only, but to ſeventy times ſeven. The Apoſtles finding this an hard ſaying upon them, ſo bearing on Fleſh and Blood, are rea-

dy to hold up their hands with admiration, and return it with ſupplication alſo, ſaying to the Lord, *Increaſe our Faith.*

But this ſeemeth not *ad idem*, and rather an anſwer impertinent, like his, who being pinched in his *Foot*, cried out, O my *Head*; and why not, O Lord, increaſe our Charity? But this Reply or Repartee, is *ad Rem*, pat unto the purpoſe: For as one who would increaſe and cheriſh a choice and weaker Plant, watereth the root, and doth not immediately apply to the ſprouts: Or, as the Husbandman, when his Seed ſown thick, cometh but thinly up, prayeth for rain to give it a Spring of increaſe; ſo pray the Apoſtles here for Faith, which being the Vital Root, giveth ſpring and increaſe to this Grace of Charity; for it is Faith that worketh Love, and worketh by Love, *Gal.* 5. 6.

Here needeth no nicer curioſity in the Diviſion of the Words, than what the preſent time ſuggeſteth, theſe days being days of *Addreſſes*, wherein all ſorts of Subjects addreſs to an Earthly Sovereign for the preſervation of their Faith and

and Privileges: And herein is an *Addreſs* of higher importance to the *Sovereign* Lord of all, wherein no true Chriſtian can be a Diſſenter, but will cordially joyn in the ſame with heart and hand. In which obſerve,

Firſt, The Perſons Addreſſing, The *Apoſtles.*
Secondly, The Perſon addreſſed to, the *Lord*; *The Apoſtles ſaid unto the Lord.*
Thirdly, the Addreſs it ſelf, ſhort, but ſweet, *increaſe our Faith.*

But it is not the Form of Words, but the matter and weight of things therein, which chiefly are to be eyed; therefore waving the Diviſion, we make our Remarks in a threefold Obſervation, in which we have a Ternary of Truths ariſing from the Text, and each may challenge its Conſideration.

Firſt, Faith is but *little* in the very *Greateſt* of Chriſt's *Little* ones (as the Saints are called): For the Apoſtles, who ſay, and pray thus, were no Pu-

nies in their Profeſſion: And though in God's *Precious* Servants Faith be alike *Precious*, as to its *Verity*, it is not alike great in its *Quantity*, but in an Eſtate of *Minority*, as they themſelves are.

Secondly, Thoſe *Minors*, or Children of God, muſt not reſt in their Dwarfiſh Eſtate of Minority, to be always *Little ones*, but muſt aſpire to, deſire, and preſs for a greater growth, or higher Pitch of Perfection in their Faith.

Thirdly, The moſt preſſing and prevalent Expedient for promotion to ſuch perfection, is fervent Prayer; for the *Apoſtles* thus *ſaid unto the Lord, Increaſe our faith.*

But Embaſſadors ruſh not immediately upon their Embaſſies, without making their more ſolemn Entry firſt, thereby preparing to be heard: And ſince the *Quid* in Nature goeth before the *Quantum*, it concerns us firſt to enquire what *Faith* is *in ſpecie*, ere we ſhew it you *in gradu*, how little it is. It

is

is not a ſtrict and elaborate definition of Faith that I will offer at: And though there are many Acts of Faith mentioned in that Syſtem of Faith, *Heb.* 11. I would rather fix on thoſe more Noble and Soveraign, which ſignalize and characterize that Grace unto us, and are proper to it *quarto modo* (as Logicians ſpeak). Therefore take in lieu thereof this Deſcription of Faith (for that definition of it, *Heb.* 11. 1. *It is the evidence of things not ſeen*; 'tis general, and giveth not unto us ſo clear an evidence or inſight into its nature), *viz.*

The Deſcription of Faith.

Faith is a ſaving Grace of the Spirit, in-wrought or in-laid in the Hearts of God's Elect, whereby the Souls of ſuch are made willing to accept of, and receive Chriſt for their alone Saviour, to obey him as their proper Lord and Soveraign, to rely firmly upon him, as their ſtay, ſanctuary, laſt refuge and retreat, and to adhere to him in life and in death.

The Parts of which will need no Proof. *Firſt*, It is a *Saving Grace*, ſo

Epheſ. 2. 8. *By grace we are ſaved through faith, and not of our ſelves, it is the gift of God.*

Secondly, It is a work or fruit of his *Spirit*, and that *Inwrought*; ſo *Gal.* 5. 22. It being a piece of Divine Manufacture, and therefore called *Faith of the operation of God:* And it is *Inlaid* work; for God is ſaid to *work us for the ſelf-ſame thing by his Spirit*, 2 Cor. 5. 5. the Original word being the ſame which the *Septuagint* uſeth of *Bezaliel* and *Aholiab*, inworking and inlaying, *Exod.* 31. 4.

Thirdly, It is inlaid in the *Hearts*, Faith being compared to a Breaſt-piece, 1 *Theſ.* 5. 8. and not an Helmet or *Head-piece* only, as ſome would have it.

Fourthly, It is in the Hearts of God's *Elect*: 'tis only in ſuch *Shells*, ὀστρακίνοις σκεύεσιν, 2 *Cor.* 4. 7. that this precious Pearl is found, therefore called the *Faith of God's Elect*, Tit. 1. 1. *And as many as were ordained to everlaſting life, believed*, Acts 13. 48. I know that ſome would read the Text backward, and in the reverſe would make it *Electio Fidelium*

lium: but this in conjunction with that other Scripture, makes it *Fides Electorum* rather.

Now for thoſe grand Acts and Operations mentioned in the deſcription, more is to be ſaid in general, before we can ſay all in theſe Particulars. How cenſurable are ſome who in their Doctrines have *adulterated* this precious Faith? The *Romaniſts* on one ſide, to deny all certainty of ſalvation, or poſſibility of aſſurance, make Faith only to be a bare Aſſent in the mind to the Word of God, as if it were no more than a Faith of common Credence; and this they would perſuade from *Heb.* 11. 6. where 'tis ſaid, that *all who would come to God, muſt believe that God is, and is a rewarder of thoſe that diligently ſeek him.* This Faith of common Credence muſt be confeſſedly in *all* that do believe: yet if this be *all*, it will take in thoſe that believe not at *all*; for neither the Devils nor the Damned will thus prove Infidels, *Mark* 1. 24. *Acts* 16. 17. nay, *the Devils* thus *believe and tremble* (ſaith St. *James*) ſuch Faith being no ſecurity to ſuch; This therefore

therefore is below the Standard of Truth.

Secondly, On the other hand, ſome Divines of the Proteſtant Profeſſion, by extreamer oppoſition to their Antagoniſts, have ſhot as much too high to hit the White; ſuch Archers were many of the Primitive Profeſſors in our Church; and ſuch to this day are ſome Great *Lutheran Divines* of greateſt Name and Character, (not to rank with ſuch our high-flown *Antinomians*) who make no leſs than *Aſſurance* the *minimum quod ſic*, or the very Eſſence of Juſtifying Faith. And whilſt they oppoſe that uncomfortable Doctrine of *Non-Aſſurance*, they wound the Truth by one more uncomfortable to the precious Saints of Chriſt, who are hereby pierced under the Fifth Rib, and ready to bleed to death. For if this *Aſſurance* only be *Juſtifying Faith*, ſuch only thereby are *ſure* that they have no Faith at all, becauſe they have no ſuch full *Aſſurance*. Thus Chriſt again doth ſuffer, and is Crucified betwixt Two *Maleſactors*, not only by thoſe on the *Left*, but thoſe on the *Right Hand*.

For

For Aſſurance is not of the *Eſſe*, or *Being*, but *Well being*. It is not the *Root* of the matter (in *Job*'s Phraſe), but the *Fruit* of *Faith*, and that of a grown *Faith*. It is not *Fides Juſtificans*, but *Juſtificati*; not the *Faith* that *juſtifieth*, but rather the *Faith* of the *Juſtified*: and 'tis clear from *Epheſ.* 1. 13. that it is not the *Eſſence*, but *Conſequence* of *Faith*; *Ye truſted after ye heard the word, and were ſealed, i. e.* after both hearing and believing they were confirmed in this aſſurance; and in very deed this *Faith* of *High Aſſurance* is more proper and peculiar to thoſe *Fathers* of the *Faithful* (ſuch as was *Abraham*, who had this *Plerophory* without any ſtaggerings at all, *Rom.* 4. 20.) than to thoſe *Weaklings*, the *Little Children* of *Abraham*, who are not of their *Father's Size*.

Yet none muſt deny what the Spirit affirms of Faith, *Heb.* 11. 1. that it is an *Evidence*, or *Fides Evidentiæ*; but this *Evidence* imports not this *Aſſurance* neither: Such conſider not the difference that's betwixt *Certitudo Subjecti* and *Objecti*: That Expreſſion implies

plies indeed a Certitude of the Object, and of the Event too; that the thing believed is true, and ſhall prove ſure and certain in the iſſue; but it doth not involve the Certitude of the *Subject*: And according to the Latitude of this Diſtinction, the Apoſtle commandeth our diligence in making our Calling and Election *ſure*. Not but Election however is as ſure as hands can make it already (that *foundation of the Lord ſtanding ſure*, 2 Tim. 2. 19.) and it can be made no ſurer in it ſelf: And though the thing be ſure *ex parte Dei*, it may not yet be ſo to us *ex parte Spei*; *i. e.* We may not yet have made our ſelves ſure of it: Thoſe who have any Eſtates in the World, have, no doubt, *Evidences* and *Aſſurances* to produce, which may hold Water, and ſecure them in holding of their *Free-holds*, and yet not many of them, without better heads then their own, can underſtand the ſtrength of thoſe their Evidences, nor poſſibly read them; and for the ſtrongeſt of them, ſuch Fines and Recoveries, they underſtand the leaſt of all. Theſe therefore being

being premiſed, and the *Bones*, or ſuch *hard* things firſt taken out, we may taſte of the Marrow of the matter in that which followeth, proceeding to thoſe very acts themſelves which do eſſentiate this Grace, and do denominate the following Species.

The Acts of Faith. Act 1.

1. The firſt Act is expreſſed to be a *willingneſs* to *accept* and *receive Chriſt as our alone Saviour*; and in relation to this, it may be termed a Faith of *Recipience*; by this very Act the Spirit deſcribeth Faith eminently, *Joh.* 1. 20. *To as many as received him, he gave them power to become the Sons of God, to as many as believed on him*: And all true Believers are thoſe *Recipients* and *Receivers*. The two Covenants of God had two differing Conditions: The firſt, *viz.* that of Works, required *doing all*, do this and live; but when we were diſabled from doing all, then ſaid God in the ſecond, the Covenant of *Grace*, *Take all*, and *Receive all*, if you cannot *do all*, and this ſhall *do* to Life; this being God's *Dilemma*, upon which he puts the Sons of

of *Adam*, either *do all*, or *take all.* Now this receiving Chriſt, is not to take him into our *Heads* only *Notion-wiſe*, but into our *Hearts* and *Arms Motion-wiſe*; and true Faith (as before was intimated) implyeth more than a bare Aſſent of the Mind, even the *Conſent* of the Will alſo, in all ſuch as are juſtified, both of which are expreſſed, 1 Tim. 1. 15. *This is a faithful ſaying*; ſo ſaith the Underſtanding indeed. But then ſaith the Will (as ready to ſecond it) and it's *worthy to be accepted.* The Compariſon is homely, but *Home* and lively, that doth elucidate them both; When a Perſon ſendeth to propoſe a Match, or tender of a Marriage to a Lady, of whom he hath a good liking, ſuitable Proffers, as to Eſtate, Portion, Joynture, and Settlement, are alſo made. The Lady (for ſure) muſt firſt believe that there is ſuch a Perſon in the World that makes this offer, and that the Motion is ſincere and ſerious, elſe all is Fiction, Fancy, and not Faith; yet this being only an act of her mind, maketh no Match; but then cometh the Point to be preſ-

ſed

ſed upon the Will in a nearer Propoſal, *viz.* Wilt thou take ſuch an one, and accept of him for thy Lord and Huſband; now, when the Will reſtipulates, ſaying, *I will accept him*, and *receive him*; 'tis this that makes up the Marriage-contract; and 'tis ſo in the Marriage-myſtical betwixt Chriſt and the Soul, wherein is *Conſent* of the Will joyned to the Aſſent of the Mind, there being more than cool words, even warm and mutual Embraces paſſing betwixt the *Contrahents*; for ſo 'tis ſaid, Heb. 11. 13. *They embraced the Promiſes*; and this importeth heart and good will. And tho Faith conſidered at large, implyeth only this aſſent to the Mind, yet juſtifying-Faith in eſpouſing Chriſt, includeth this act of the Will, otherwiſe the Devils may hope to ſpeed; for they believe indeed, but tremble, and have no heart or liking to the motion.

Secondly, The ſecond Act conſiſts in the like willingneſs to *obey Chriſt*, as the Souls proper Lord and Sovereign, which we may term the Faith of *Obedience*; for whatever is received, muſt Act 2.

be

be received, not only *ad modum Recipientis*, but *juxta conditionem offerentis*; men must receive the thing upon the terms on which 'tis proffered: Now Christ in Scripture is not offered as *Saviour* only, but *Sovereign*, and he is tendered as *Head*, no leſs then *Husband*, as *Lord* and *Christ*, for Benediction and Juriſdiction too; ſo *Acts* 2. 36. *Lord and Christ*. *Acts* 5. 35. *Prince and Saviour*. 2 *Pet*. 1. 11. Jeſus Chriſt *our Lord and Saviour*; elſe who (I wonder) would refuſe ſo good an offer of being happy? And ſince he is offered to the Sons of Men upon no other terms, all who would receive him, muſt be willing ſo to take him for a Saviour, and ſo to obey him as a Sovereign, with that joyous Acclamation, *Iſa*. 32. 22. *The Lord is our King, he is our Lawgiver, he ſhall ſave us*; they muſt be for Law as well as Love. But in this *taking Chriſt*, do not miſtake your ſelves and me, as if I meant your bringing with you that precious preſent portion of Obedience. No; ſouls are *Bought*, and Chriſt takes no poor ſoul for *Portion* that is brought. He takes

takes not any becauſe obedient, but to make them ſo; therefore this is ſaid not of obedience actual (for that, like to Aſſurance, is the fruit of juſtifying Faith, and is called the *obedience of Faith*, *Rom.* 1. 5.) but of obedience Seminal, Initial and Radical, of a *Will to obey* (which is the ſeed of after-obedience) as well as of a *Will to be ſaved*; and all ſuch muſt have in them this *Root of the Matter*, *viz.* a ſincere deſire and will to be *Ruled*, no leſs than to be *Saved* by Chriſt; it was therefore wittily aſſerted, *Fides juſtificat cum nondum peperit, eſt tamen parturiens, puerpera obedientiæ, & operibus gravida*: Faith when it juſtifies is *big* and *pregnant* with good works; It is at the *Pitch-bank* of obedience, *lying* in with it, but not actually yet *brought to bed* of it.

Thirdly, There muſt be the like will and reſolution of *relying* on Chriſt, as our *Stay*, *Sanctuary*, and *Laſt Retreat*, which others term Faith of *Reliance*, *Affiance* and *Recumbence*; and this is that moſt Eſſential Act that *juſtifying in Scripture* is deſcribed by: thus truſt- Act. 3.

ing is called *relying* on God, 2 *Chron.* 16. 7, 8. and *ſtaying ones ſelf on God* is a *circumlocution of believing*, *Iſa.* 50. 12. and *Iſa.* 26. 3. *Rolling ones ſelf on God*, is the ſignification of it in the Original, being a Metaphor taken from a *drowning man* that's going down the ſtream, and ready to *ſink*. And 'tis alſo expreſſed as emphatically by *Leaning*; and the Spouſe of Chriſt is deſcribed as *leaning upon her Beloved*, *Cant.* 8. 11. And if ſome have ſcoffed at the Word (as too *canting*), miſcalling it a *Lolling*, they have not laughed the *Serious* out of countenance thereby, who find they cannot long *ſtand* upon that ſingle *Foot* of Faith, except they *lean*; *In te ſtas & non ſtas, fruſtra nititur qui non innititur*, ſaid holy *Bernard*. Now what this *Affiance* and *Reliance* is, I cannot better parallel than by that Example out of *Quintus Curtius*: "*Alexander* falling "deadly ſick, ſent to his *Fidelio* and "Phyſician, to require his help; who "ſtraight prepared a Potion for him; "but in the *interim* he received a Let-"ter of Caution from a *Privadoe*, to "beware of his Phyſician, for he was "ſuborned

"ſuborned to poyſon him: But when "the *Drench* was ready, *Alexander*, to "teſtifie his *Reliance* upon the fidelity "of his friend the Phyſician, took the "Potion in the one hand, and drank it "off, and with the other hand at the "ſame time, reached out the Letter of "Diſcovery to him; hereby ſhewing, "that he truſted him not only with his "*Life*, but as his *very Life* herein was "Affiance, wherein had he failed, he "had loſt both precious Life and all. And ſuch is true Truſt in God, ſo to relie on him, as to run the riſque of Life, Soul, and all upon that ſingle Adventure; and this without *enſuring*, as did *Eſther* once, *If I periſh, I periſh*: And in this Reliance of Faith, there ſtill wanteth that full aſſurance which was in *Abraham*, *Heb.* 11. 17, 18. This ('tis true) may ſeem a daring act and bold adventure that Faith makes, yet 'tis a rational one, becauſe there is but that one way for it: and *quod unicum eſt, deliberandum non eſt*, without Chriſt we undoubtedly periſh; and by *Relying* on him we *may live*; and if not, we can but *periſh*, as the *Lepers* once

ſaid in the like Exigence, 2 *Kings* 7. 4.

Act. 4. *Fourthly*, There muſt be like willingneſs of *cleaving* to him, and that to the laſt gaſp, when our Souls are ready to *cleave* to the duſt: This is but the former *Reliance* pieced with *Perſeverance*, which Divines term the Faith of *Adherence*. This is reaſonably added; for many, with the *Rich man* in the Goſpel, ſeem ready to cloſe with Chriſt, hoping to get by the bargain; *viz. deligitur Ieſus propter Ieſum*; but when it was told him, nothing was to be had, for Chriſt had not whereon to lay his head, we hear no more of the man; he quit (no doubt) his Poſt, and parted: So hard it is to follow even *Naked*, a *Naked Chriſt*. Now hereby God trys his faithful ones, as *Naomi* did *Ruth*, cap. 1. 12. She bids her daughter depart; for nothing but *Wo* and *Want* could be expected by following her, and wiſhes her a *Farewel:* but no diſadvantages could diſſwade; ſhe was not to be ſhaken off on any terms; *Nothing but death* (ſaith ſhe) *ſhall ever part us, Thy God ſhall be my God*, &c. Now when ſhe

ſhe ſaw] Affection raiſed to ſuch Reſolution in her, ſhe received her indeed, and took her to the Land of *Canaan*, where they happily lived and died together: And thus Chriſt receives poor believing Souls which, maugre all diſcouragements, will *cling* and *cleave to him with full purpoſe of heart:* he ſaith to ſuch, *My God ſhall be thy God, and my people thy people.* Thus dealt he with the Woman of *Canaan* that cried ſo after him, *Mat.* 15. 26. *Firſt*, he deigned her not any anſwer, and ſhe cries on; then he gives her an *uncomfortable* anſwer, ſaying, he had nought for her; *I am not ſent but to the loſt ſheep of the houſe of Iſrael:* ſhe ſtill cries on; then he gives her an *unkind* anſwer, calling her, in effect, *Dog:* but as fire gathereth heat by water thrown upon it, ſo the Woman's Faith gathered ſtill more Puiſſance and Confidence by this oppoſition; and as many waters quench not *Love*, ſo neither quench they *Faith which works by Love*; for ſuch Love is ſtronger than Death; and when the poor Patient ſtill *clings* and *cleaves*, he then from ſuch *Adherence* giveth her

Aſſurance; O woman, great is thy faith: And if that be deemed the ſtrongeſt Glue that holds and cleaves the faſteſt, then that Faith is the firmeſt which is *maximæ adhærentiæ*, of greateſt adherence; and as ſtrong ſins, by Divines, ſo the ſtrongeſt Graces are beſt known by this Remark; when Soul and Body will ſunder, being not able longer to hold together, that the Soul is ready to *cleave* to the *Duſt*, then to *cleave to God* to the laſt gaſp; that neither Death nor Life can ſeparate the *Soul* from its Saviour: This is that Faith indeed that *Job* ſpoke of, *Chap.* 13. 15. *Though he kill me, yet will I truſt in him.* The Original word for truſting, ſignifies *rolling* ones ſelf upon God, a Metaphor taken from a drowning periſhing perſon. Now 'tis ſo with all that are ſinking, whatever it be they once lay hold of with their dying graſps, they will hold their *hold* to death, and not let go but with life it ſelf: 'Tis ſo with every Soul ready to ſink and periſh, in graſping hold of Chriſt, that Root of *Jeſſe*, it will hold faſt its hold unto the laſt. And theſe may ſuffice for Explication, in opening

opening the Nature of Faith, the *Quid.* And now come we to the *Quantum*, in ſpeaking to the ſeveral Obſervations in their proper place and order, *Lord increaſe our faith.*

SECTION II.

THE *Firſt Obſervation* then, and Truth ariſing from the Text, followeth, *viz.*

That Faith, as Oriental and Precious a Pearl as it is, is yet but ſmall and little in God's Precious *Servants, the very Diſciples of Chriſt.* The Truth of which is made out beſt by the Senſe, Conſcience and Experience of truly ſenſible and experienced Chriſtians, whoſe *Proofs* give the ſtrongeſt *Proof* unto this Point, when they come to try the ſtrength of this ſame Grace: For as ſome men (eſpecially thoſe of greateſt mettle) may paſs for men of ſtrength, until it come to the grapple, and then they prove but Obſerv. 1.

Shrimps; ſo many Chriſtians (eſpecially thoſe of nimbleſt parts) ſeem the ableſt Chriſtians, as if nothing were too difficult to ſuch (and nothing would indeed be ſo unto them, if Hearts and Faith did not fail them, is expreſly ſaid, *Mark* 9. 32.) yet it proves (alas) with ſuch on trial, as with Patients, reputedly robuſt, when tried with ſtrong and malignant *Fevers*, they are taken off their very feet on the firſt aſſault, and find themſelves moſt feeble things; and this is diſcoverable in their various *Rencounters*, as,

Reaſons that it is ſo.

1. When their *Faith* is to encounter *Senſe*, even that is too hard for it; nor can it cope with the *allurements* of it; and it is as often *non-plus'd* by it: for men find it hard to act *Faith* beyond *Senſe*, as well as againſt *Senſe*; or to make their Faith out-run the Eye in believing God further than they can ſee him: *Thou haſt ſeen, therefore thou believeſt*, ſaid Chriſt to one who was as weak as water, *John* 20. 29. But this is little Faith in the *interim*, which one may *put in his eye*.

Secondly,

Secondly, When Faith is to encounter Fear, which is a feeble and cowardly Paſſion, their Hearts and Faith both at once fail, as appears in St. *Peter*'s ſinking, whoſe Faith was under water, no leſs than his Head. This Faith was weak which Fear could baffle, *Matth.* 14. 31. and deſerved that *Reprimand*, *Where is thy faith?* as the like, *Why did ye fear, O ye of little faith?*

Thirdly, When Faith is to encounter doubtings and ſtaggerings, theſe come from weakneſs in the Nervous parts, as we diſcern in Drunkards ſtaggering, and argue weakneſs; for *Abraham* being *ſtrong in faith, ſtaggered not*, 'tis ſaid, *Rom.* 4. 17.

Fourthly, When Faith is to encounter *Difficulties* and *Improbabilities*; what could a weak Faith have done in *Abraham*'s caſe, to believe the Promiſe of having Iſſue, when the odds was an Hundred to One againſt him? or what in the caſe of *Moſes*, *Numb.* 11. 22. in which the *Mercy* was ſo much an *overmatch* to the man of God, if he had not been ſomething more than *Man*: *If all the flocks and herds ſhould be killed, how*

how ſhould they victual the Camp for many days, nay, months, ſaid he?

Fifthly, When Faith is to encounter Temptations: Now theſe St. *Paul* doth range both on the *Right hand* and the *Left,* 2 *Cor.* 6. 7. *Firſt,* as to thoſe on the *Left hand,* ſuch as *Dangers, Adverſities, Perſecutions,* and ſuch *Iniſtrous* Occurrences. St. *Peter* thought himſelf an *Hero,* profeſſing his moſt daring Courage e're he came to the field. But his Lord (who better knew what was in man) foretold his Cowardice, that he ſhould prove a *White Liver'd Soldier* when it came unto the ſharp; and that then he ſhould be forced to eat his words thrice in the ſpace of one *Cock-crow,* and that at the voice of a *ſilly woman, Matth.* 26. 34. 71. And the greateſt *Allmanſirs* of us all, who are ſo daring whilſt Death is at a diſtance, yet coming to face that *King of Terrors,* it is well if Death's grim Viſage affright us not, as much as did *Arioviſtus Germans* great *Cæſar's Soldiers,* and make us to give back: and if ſo, 'tis *Demonſtration* of the Point, *Prov.* 24. 10. *If thou fainteſt in the day of battle, thy ſtrength*

ſtrength it is but weakneſs. Secondly, Try we it by Temptations on the *Right hand*, ſuch as *Plenty* and *Proſperity:* For look, as men of weak Stomachs and Conſtitutions cannot deal with fat things or full meals, ſo 'tis hard for men of weak faith, ὄλϵιον καλαπέψαι, to digeſt fatter fortunes, or bear fuller Cups, which, like ſtrong Wine, overturn their weaker heads: And few there be that are an equal *Match* to thoſe *great* things of the World, excepting thoſe of ſtrong faith, *which hath maſtery over the world*, 1 *John* 5. 4.

Sixthly, When Faith is to encounter *Difficult Duties:* What could a weak *Faith* have done in *Abraham*'s caſe, in ſacrificing his only Son and Heir, the Hope of the World, at which he ſet his Soul and the Souls of all men elſe, nay, and the very *Truth* of God at ſtake (for ſo was the Promiſe, *In thy ſeed ſhall all the nations of the world be bleſſed*), venturing all at one blow: This would have ſtaggered a *well hearted man* againſt Hope, thus to believe in Hope, that at the ſame time he ſhould put his Son away, and yet have his Son again; for this

this was his particular faith, *Gen.* 22. 5. *Tarry here till I and my Son go, and we will return again:* So *Heb.* 11. 17. And how hard it is for a Christian to subdue Vindictive Passions, and digest repeated Injuries and Affronts, without Resentments of Revenge, Nature best teacheth. The word *Ultio* (as *Seneca* could say) was *inhumanum verbum*; but the thing it self is too *Humane*, though *Inhumane*; and so said the same *Moralist*, blowing both *hot* and *cold* out of the same mouth, *Inhumanum est non ulcisci.* The very Disciples themselves, *Men*, and something *more than Men*, were in this to learn; for in the Suburbs of the Text they perceived themselves to be defective twible in this particular, saying, *Lord increase our faith*; their little faith being insufficient: And the like may be said of grappling with other the like exorbitant affections.

Seventhly, When Faith is to conflict with *Desertions*, in which there is an high *Pitch'd Battle* in our Christian *Warfare*, the Soul being to encounter not Satan only, but God himself as an *Enemy*. Now when both these *joyn Forces*

ces on it, (as in *Job*'s caſe) to bear that *brunt and ſhock*, and yet to *ſtand* upon ones feet, argueth the ſtrength of Faith indeed, as is ſaid of *Jacob*, *Hoſ.* 12. 3. *by ſtrength he had power with God.* But *contraria contraria*, the contrary ſpeaks the contrary.

Eighthly, *In Converſations*, when Faith is to encounter *Scandals and Offences* conceived from things of Nature indifferent, it is hard to walk without ſtumbling ſometimes, and being offended; and whence is this, but from the weakneſs of *Faith*? *for when we are offended, we are made weak*, ſaith St. *Paul*, 1 *Cor.* 14. 21. and ſhew our ſelves *Weaklings*, they being Children that *ſtumble* upon every little *ſtone* and *ſcruple*; nay, upon a *ſtraw.*

Ninthly, It may be diſcerned by our Affections, the *beatings and pulſations* there, (if men would but lay their own hands, not upon their hands only, but hearts and breaſts) how faint, unequal, and intermitting would they find them? And ſuch *weak Pulſes* are certain *Indications of weaker Patients and feebler Vitals.*

Laſtly,

Laſtly, It may be diſcovered by the ſtops and interruptions Chriſtians find in their *Devotions* on ſlight occaſions; for though none can juſtly wonder if *Atheiſtical Perſons* call not on God, and that God is not in all their thoughts, *Pſal.* 10. 4.. more than that a Watch not wound up at all, ſhould not go; but that holy men themſelves, who *wind up their hearts* mornings and nights as duly as their Watches, by thoſe ſlight diſtractions ſhould have interruptions given to their Devotions, ſo as to put them to a *ſtand*: Thoſe *ſtoppages* ſure in their moſt ſacred motions, as well as thoſe other unequal *Pulſations*, plainly ſhew, that the *main Spring*, their Faith, is but a weak one.

So that in all theſe there needs no better Proof than that of the experienced hearts of good Chriſtians, who though they may paſs for *Reubens*, the *chief for ſtrength and dignity*, they find themſelves degraded *Reubens* indeed, unſtable as water. This for the ὅτι, that it is ſo.

Secondly,

Secondly, For the διότι, why 'tis ſo: That Faith is ſo *Little* in God's *Little Ones*, will require this further Demonſtration, upon theſe following Accounts.

Firſt, Faith is the Seminal of Eternal Life: Some may call it (as *Luther* doth, Regeneration), *puerpera Regni Cœlorum*, becauſe it is a pregnant Grace, *big* with Glory: but our Saviour terms it the *ſeed of the kingdom of heaven*, *Matth.* 13. 31. The kingdom of Heaven is there compared to a *Grain of Muſtard ſeed*, which may play at *Moſt* and *Leaſt* with all Plants; and that Faith is that Grain of Muſtard Seed, is further ſaid, *Matth.* 17. 20. Now the Seminals of the greateſt things, even of Life, and of Eternal Life, are minute and ſmall. Reaſons why it is ſo.

Secondly, The ſtate of Grace, at the beſt, is but an *Eſtate of Minority*, till we come to that *perfect man, that fulneſs of the meaſure of the ſtature of Chriſt*, *Eph.* 4. 12. Therefore as every Grace, ſo *Faith* muſt be in its Minority; for a *little ſhooe* doth beſt fit a *little foot*: We

We are all *Minorites*; nay the beſt of us very *Minums*, *leſs than the leaſt*, ſaith the Apoſtle; *and we* (ſaith he, putting himſelf into the Poll) *know but in part*, 1 *Cor.* 13. 9, 10, 12.

Thirdly, (Which reſembleth much its Elder Brother) The Eſtate of Grace is a mixed Eſtate, and bordereth upon the ſtate of Corruption; and theſe are checkered *parte per Pale:* And this is the charge of *Honour* that the greateſt of Chriſtians do yet *bear* in their *Eſcoucheons*. Now ſince the ſoyl or ground of the Soul is ſo *uneven* and rugged, *Faith*, as the Bowl, (though never ſo well *aimed* or directed) can never *run* ſo *ſmooth*. but it will meet with many a *rub* by doubts and diſtractions; and therefore often proveth a *Short Caſt*, and reacheth not the *Mark*; And as Water, when the hotteſt of all, will ſoon chill, becauſe it hath in it *aliquid contrarii*, a radical coldneſs that reduceth it to its Natural Temper (ſaith *Ariſtotle*): ſo *Faith*, when it is moſt *fervent* (no leſs than Charity), may *chill* and *grow cold* by *iniquity abounding in our natures*; having in it *aliquid contrarii*, mixtures of

un-

unbelief, as the believing Parent confeſſed, *Mark* 9. 23. *If thou canſt do any thing* (ſaith the Patient) *ſave. If thou canſt believe* (ſaith the Phyſician) I can do any thing. *Lord, I believe; help mine unbelief*, is the Repartee.

Fourthly, Faith it ſelf, though it be the *New Creature*, and the beſt of *Creatures*, is but ſtill a *Creature*, or a *Created* Habit, and therefore not *Omnipotent*, but *Impotent* rather, were it not *backed* with the *Power* of God, 1 *Pet.* 1. 5. And as ſuch, it is purely depending on the Influences of Heaven (as the *Sea*, or the *Moon* upon the *Sun*); and therefore it muſt needs have its *Ebbs* and *Flows*, *Fluxes* and *Refluxes*; and therefore it cannot be always *High-water* in a gracious heart.

Laſtly, (Which is the final Cauſe indeed, or Reaſon of all): This is to magnifie the Power of God the more, and the Glory of this Grace, that ſo poor and *feeble* a thing as Faith, ſhould be enabled to do ſuch mighty things as are recorded of it, *Heb.* 11. 33, 34. It was wonder enough, that *Alexander*, a ſtrong man, or *nim-*

ble Goat (as *Daniel* repreſents him) ſhould skip over ſo many Kingdoms of the World, conquering all before him; but 'tis a Miracle to ſee a weak believer, in his *Paper-boat* (like *Drake*) ſurrounding the Earth, and riding out all ſtorms at Sea, without making *Shipwrack*, and arriving ſafe with its Adventure at its deſired Port, thoſe *Fair Havens*. This ſheweth the skill and power of the *Pilot*: And 'tis ſtrange to ſee a Spark of Fire, and of Divine Light, or (to uſe the Prophet's Compariſon) a Candle-wick in the bottom of a Socket (much more likely to go out in a ſtink, than to hold in), and this in the midſt of a whole Ocean of Corruption, continue ſtill like Lamps in *Roman Urns*, ſo many years unquenched. It is the *Power* of God, and not *Poor Faith* that can do this, as the Apoſtle confeſſeth, 1 *Pet.* 1. 5. *We are kept by the power of God through Faith unto ſalvation.*

Thus Faith, whether playing at *Moſt* or *Leaſt*, gains the *Prize played for*, the Glory of God; for *Abraham* being *ſtrong in faith, glorified God* ('tis ſaid), *Rom.* 4. 20. And weak faith in this ſenſe glo-

glorifieth God yet more; therefore ſaith the Apoſtle well, 2 *Cor.* 4. 7. *We bear this heavenly Ware*, or Fraught *in* crazed *earthy Veſſels* (alluding, I ſuppoſe, to *Gideon's* Story, wherein the Light in Earthen Pitchers atchieved the Conqueſt), *that the Glory may be to God.* And theſe ſufficiently demonſtrate the Obſervation, *That Faith is little in Chriſt's little ones*; both *that* it is ſo, and *why* it is ſo.

But e're we proceed to the next Obſervations, let us make ſome *Reflections* upon this Truth, by cloſer *Application*, and gather what hath been already *ſtrowed.* Application.

1. This may give check and *Rebuke* to the Self-confident, thoſe *Soliſidian* Chriſtians, who think they have *all Faith*, whilſt they have *none at all*, and fancy they can do *all things* (with the Apoſtle), when really they can do *nothing.* In viſiting of the ſick, and preſſing Faith on ſuch Patients, how often have I heard and feared that reply, *O I have a ſtrong Faith of mine own,*

thanks be unto God; I have, with the Prophet, *Jer.* 28. 6. ſaid *Amen* to ſuch; but it was not that *Amen Aſſeverantis*, but *Exoptantis*; it was mine Option that it were ſo, but yet I feared it was not ſo; for ſuch as had more Faith than they, could not ſay ſo. It fares (alas!) with ſuch, as with poor Patients taken off their feet by malignant *Fevers*, and taken rather in their heads; you ask them, how it is with them? and 'tis very well if they can walk about the Chamber? Yes, they can do that, and are ready to get out of bed; but they are no ſooner up, but they *ſink down*; like *Sampſon*, they think to *rouze themſelves as at other times*, but their ſtrength is gone. It proved ſo with *David*, aſſaying to try the ſtrength of his Confidence, *Pſal.* 30. 6. *I ſaid in my proſperity, I ſhall never be moved; thou hideſt but thy face, and I was troubled.* The Caſe of ſuch is ſadly deplorable, deſperate and deadly: for ſuch are thoſe Whole ones, that *need not a Phyſician*: And the *Aphoriſm* of the great Phyſician determineth their doom; *The weak that yet perceive not their own weakneſs,*

are

are in a woful way; *iis mens laborat*, the very mind and ſoul in ſuch is ſick alſo: Men may write a *Lord have mercy* on them, for they are viſited with the *Plague*. And though the *Plague of the heart* is highly malignant, 1 *Kings* 8. 38. yet this *Plague* in the head, in ſome ſenſe, is more incurable: for this was the Judgment of thoſe *Sacred Cleanſers*, *Levit.* 13. 44. they did pronounce ſuch *utterly unclean*; *for their Plague was in their heads*. This all amounteth only to ſtrong Fancy, but not *ſtrong Faith*; and I fear, *no Faith at all*.

Secondly, This Truth is matter of ſtrong *Conſolation* to thoſe weak Believers, who ſo much complain of the *Want and Weakneſs of Faith*. Though the Doctrine may ſeem a Comfortleſs Doctrine; *viz. That Precious Foith is weak in God's Precious ones*: It is upon the Second Conſideration of *moſt comfortable uſe*: You Children of God may ſee thereby, that there are *more Children*, *Dwarfs* and *Little Ones* than you: more *Slips* and tender *Plants* in God's Uſe of Conſolation.

Garden than old *Stocks*; more *Oſiers* than *Oaks* and *Cedars* in his Paradice. Perfection is the *Mark* indeed that all have aimed at; but none ever hit the *White*: Their *Arrows* (like *Jonathan's*, 1 *Sam.* 20. 26.) ſome have fallen on the left hand, ſome on the right, ſome many *Bow-lengths* ſhort——and the reſt have quite flown over into Glory. And unto all you that are ready to faint under thoſe *weak Vitals* of a *Feeble* Faith, I have theſe many Cordial Conſiderations in readineſs to apply;

1. Though Faith be little, our Heavenly Father will not *deſpiſe the day of ſmall things*, *Zech.* 4. 10. He deigneth not only, not to deſpiſe, but to cheriſh the weakeſt Grace, *Iſa.* 42. 3. The very *ſmoaking Flax*, or *Candle-wick*, in the bottom of the *Socket* (as the word importeth), more like to ſtink, and go out, he will not caſt away, tread out, or extinguiſh. See the like Promiſe, *Iſa.* 40. 29. Nay, let all the Precious Promiſes of God in Scri-

Scripture be computed, and where One is given to the *Strong*, Ten are prepared for the *Weak*, becauſe the *Weakeſt* need *Cordials* moſt: And God, who faileth not in *Neceſſaries*, ſuperaboundeth not in things *ſupervacaneous* (as Divines do ſpeak). The weaker the Child, the more *indulgent* is the care and kindneſs of the *Tender Hearted Parent* towards it; it is ſet and dandled upon the Knee, becauſe a *Weakling*. And ſhall the Father of *Mercies* and *Bowels* (who begetteth theſe) be more hard hearted to his little ones that believe in him? It was ſaid of the *Beloved Diſciple*, *Diſcipulum minimum, Ieſus amabat maxime*; The *leſſer*, the *greater* ſtill in the care and affection of the Parent.

Secondly, As the Reaſon of the former, the *Seminals* of the greateſt things are often the leaſt, and ſo is this *Grain of Muſtard Seed, the Seed of the Kingdom of heaven, that ſhooteth up to Heaven it ſelf*; and that God, *that calleth the things that are not, as if they were*, *Rom.* 4. 17. calleth theſe minuter Seminals by the name of the things they do Cordial 2.

produce. Thus we call the very Seed by the Name of the Fruits and Plants, as *Cummin*, *Caraway*, *Coriander*, *Mellon*, *Cucumber*; and of the very *Pippins* of Fruit, we ſay, this is a *Pearmain*, this a *Red-ſtreak*, or *Haruy*. The very firſt motions of Faith, are accounted of, and accepted for Faith, in that remarkable Inſtance wherein Faith hath much of failure, *Mark* 9. 22.

Cordial 3. *Thirdly*, It is the *Quid*, not the *Quantum*; the *Verity* and *Specialty*, not the *Quantity* that God exacteth; and God bringeth not with him ſo much the *Ballances*, to take the Weight, but a *Touch-ſtone* to try the Truth of our Graces: Nor is *Belſhazzar's Mene Tekel* to be applied in this caſe, *Dan.* 5. 27. St. *Peter* being examined about the Quantity and Meaſure; *Loveſt thou me more than theſe? John* 21. 15. cautiouſly replied only as to the *Verity* and *Matter*, *thou knoweſt I love thee.* And if you can but anſwer and averre [*Lord, I believe*], with him in the Goſpel, *Mark* 9. 22. it is enough, though you want in weight, and acknowledge

knowledge your unbelief: for Faith by that Inſtance may be true Faith, but yet a weak one; and the *little one* may be a true Child of God, though a very *little one*, and *weakling*. *Silver Oare* hath in it much of Earth, filth, and droſſineſs, and yet we call it Silver the while, and prize it as precious metal; and God will not reject his precious Oar for *Refuſe*, becauſe of thoſe droſſy mixtures of Infidelity, above Two Thirds, *Zech.* 13. 9. but he will *refine* it, and *purge* away the *Tin* and *Droſs*: 'Tis only counterfeit Coyn that God calls *Reprobate*, and caſteth back. And in the mean while no *Goldſmith* is more chary of preſerving the *Duſt* and *Filings* of Gold, than is his great *Maſter* and *Maker*, becauſe even theſe have their *Weight* and *Worth* to him that knoweth how to value them.

Fourthly, Faith, as it is a precious Grace, it is *alike precious* in all Believers, 2 *Pet.* 1. 1. All ſuch to whom the Apoſtle writ, had received the *like precious Faith* with himſelf, *Saintſhip* being one thing, and *Apoſtleſhip* another; Cordial 4.

ther; for the *Majus* and *Minus* vary not the *Species*. There is (ſaith St. *Auguſtin*) *eadem ratio rotunditatis*, the ſame reaſon of roundneſs in a little *Ball*, that there is in the great *Ball* of the Earth, both being alike round; and the leaſt Grain of Gold is as precious in its Nature as a Tun or *Talent*. The leaſt of *Diamonds*, though not of the ſame value, is of the like precious Vertue with the greateſt: and ſo all Faith is alike precious; for the leaſt Faith *coſt* Chriſt his precious blood as well as the greateſt; and can receive Chriſt, that *Precious Pearl*, as well as the ſtrongeſt: and therefore it is as truly Faith as the greater. And hence it is, that the Lambs and Little Ones are ſo welcome to the Father's Boſome: *Suffer little children to come to me*, ſaid our Saviour, *and forbid them not; for of ſuch is the Kingdom of Heaven: and he embraced them in his Arms*, *Matth.* 16. 16. So that (as Lawyers ſay of the Principality of *Wales*) *Non-age* is no *bar* to ſuch from *claiming* their Royal *Inheritance*, though they ſeem *Minors*.

Fifthly,

Fifthly, Though this Faith be little, yet it is *maximæ virtutis in minima mole* (as it is ſaid of thoſe Stars that appear ſo little) One Grain of Faith is able to caſt down great Mountains, *Mat.* 17. 20. and one Grain of *Muſk* will ſweeten a whole houſe: And as a Guiney in Gold will carry men further on the way than ten times the weight in Silver; one *Dram* of this Grace of Faith will do more than a *Pound* of Parts, Wit or Wealth, and carry men further *heaven-wards*; becauſe it is a Saving Grace that will not *ſquander*, as is excellently ſhown, 1 *Pet.* 1. 4, 5. *We are kept by faith through the power of God to ſalvation; and ſhall receive the end of our faith, that ſalvation of our ſouls.* And thus the Wings of a poor Swallow ſhall mount that little Bird as ſoon to Heaven, as ſhall the Wings of an Eagle her. Cordial 5.

Sixthly, And more particularly: The weakeſt hand of Faith can receive Chriſt, that *Pearl* of much Price, as well as a ſtronger. Were we (I confeſs) Cordial 6

feſs) under the Terms of the firſt Covenant, to *do* all for Life, then the ſtrong Faith would have much the *odds*, for doing great things, becauſe little Faith can do *little*. But under the Second Covenant, the Condition is Reception only; *Take all*, or *receive all*. Now the leaſt of God's little Children can receive or take that Pearl or Diamond that is offered: And 'tis better ſuited to the ſervice; for Faith in its Nature is the pooreſt, moſt empty and beggarly of all other Graces; and being *manus indiga*, as an empty hand, 'tis fitteſt for receiving. *Charity*, *Bounty*, and *Beneficence*, ſeem Graces much more great and generous, much outdoing Faith, it being accounted a *more bleſſed thing to give than to receive*. But Faith out-grows theſe quite, and becometh *Rich* by that Trade of begging; nay, it *ſits* at the *Receipt of Cuſtom*, receiving continually; and ſuch *Receivers* rarely miſs of being *Rich*. And God honours this Grace above all, to be that *eſpouſing* Grace, becauſe he marrieth no Soul upon account of *Portion* that it can bring, how great ſoever, leſt

leſt any ſhould be proud, and *boaſt of what they bring*, *Eph.* 2. 9. Therefore he makes [Poor Faith] his eſpouſed *Damſel.*

Seventhly, Which compleateth and accompliſheth the former: The weakeſt goeth not to the Wall, as uſually; but the weakeſt Faith receiveth of Chriſt *Righteouſneſs* to Life and Juſtification, as well as the greateſt, *Rom.* 1. 17. That *Life and Righteouſneſs is revealed from faith to faith:* that is, from leaſt to moſt, from the loweſt to the higheſt degree of it. And why doth he ſay it is *revealed?* Cordial 7.

1. Becauſe Natural Life could never have diſcovered this, or once have dreamed of one man's being made righteous by another's Righteouſneſs: *Fleſh and Blood* could never have revealed this (as Chriſt ſaid unto *Peter*).

2. Becauſe in the times of the Law this Myſtery was only veiled in Types and Shadows; but to very few was this *revealed*, as the Prophet complaineth, *Iſa.* 53. 1. It was then, as well as now, Je-

Jehovah our righteouſneſs; Chriſt *was the ſame yeſterday and to day, Heb.* 13. 8. He was the *Door* of the Sheep always, by which they *entred* into the lower and upper Fold, both to Heaven above, and that Heaven on Earth below, *John* 10. 1, 7. The Door was then in being, and was ſet up upon the ſame Hinges; but it ſtood *a-jar* (as we ſay). The way to the Holy of Holies was but in part opened, *Heb.* 9. 8. It was ſet wide open by the Goſpel indeed, *Heb.* 10. 20. Therefore in Comparative ſpeaking, the *Law* came by *Moſes*, but *Grace* and *Truth* by Chriſt, *John* 1. 17. Now ſo much of *Faith* as will but bring thoſe *Little Lambs* within the *Door*, makes them as ſafe as the houſed Cattle, *Exod.* 9. 20. againſt all *hail* and *hazard*, and as ſure as the ſureſt, though others may *pierce* further into the *Secrets* of God's Houſe, and to the Privy-Chambers of his Preſence. It is worth obſerving, that St. *John* diverſifies the ſeveral *ſizes* of Saints by proper Terms, 1 *John* 2. 12. Some he calls *Young men*; theſe are ſtrong, as he ſaith, *ver.* 12. Some he calls *Fathers*; theſe are aged and

and experienced Chriſtians: But others he calls *Little Children*; and what ſaith he of them? *You have known the Father*, ver. 13. Now though ſuch are ſhort of Men in Strength, and Fathers in Experience, yet thoſe very little Children, that know little, have this Remark of Children, that they *know their Father*, and can ſay, *Abba Father* too. In ſhort, the leaſt Bud draweth the ſaving Sap of Life from Chriſt, that *Root of Jeſſe*, as well as the ſtrongeſt Branch.

Eighthly, The leaſt of this Grace amounteth to more than the greateſt gifts; and the Apoſtle calls it, *a more excellent way*; accounting ſuch ſaving Graces τὰ κρείσσονα, better things, *becauſe accompanying ſalvation*, *Heb.* 6. 9. And what if thoſe of nimbler parts ſeem to out-run you (as *John* did *Peter*, *Luke* 24. 12.) yet you may come in *good place*, and carry a good *Prize*, and *ſo run, that ye may obtain.* Cordial 8.

Ninthly, You complain, perhaps, of *much Infidelity*, and lack of *Aſſurance*: Cordial 9.

i. e.

i. e. You have not that which you may *happily* want, and yet be *happy* enough: If you have the Faith of *Adherence*, you have the Root of the matter, which will abide when thoſe *Buds* and *Bloſſoms* fall and fade. And this Adherence hath in it more of the Eſſence of Faith than that Aſſurance; nay, will paſs for Evidence, and will be *Adherence*, when *Aſſurance* is no *Aſſurance*: And though the lack of this may make you incredulous, it cannot render you *Infidels* or *Unbelievers*: for the *Schools* difference betwixt *Incredulus* and *Infidelis*. But if this will not ſtill ſatisfie, thoſe mixtures of Infidelity complained of, will not wholly bereave you of Aſſurance, if you hold faſt by that *Adherence*; for he that complained, even of Infidelity, *Mark* 9. 24. is not *non-plus'd* to a *Nullity*, but can averre it aſſuredly [*Lord, I believe*]. Nay, God makes uſe of weak Faith, with *doubtings*, to promote Aſſurance, and put the *doubt* quite out of *doubt*, as *John* 20. 28. *Thomas* (and there are more *Thomas's* than one), from *doubting*, is brought to *aſſurance*, and to ſay, *My Lord and my God*. His Infideli-

ty

ty (ſaith a Father) conduced more to this Certainty of *Infallibility*, than the better Faith of all the Apoſtles beſide. Complain no longer then (Precious Saints), that you are *feeble* in Faith, and can neither *ſtand* nor *go*: you conſider not the Power of God, *that is able to make you ſtand*, *Rom.* 14. 4. nor the hand of God, that took *Iſrael* and *Ephraim* by the *Arms* (when little Children), *teaching them to go*, *Hoſ.* 11. 1, 3. Though the Feet of Faith be never ſo weak, if you can but *come* to Chriſt by *hold*; nay, if you can either *creep* or *go*, it is enough, he will not put you away, *John* 6. 35. And if you have but that *ſingle eye* of Faith to ſee withal, and look but towards him, this ſhall do: *Look to me and be ye ſaved all the ends of the earth*, *Iſa.* 45. 22. But more of theſe anon. Why ſhould we now *foyl* the ground that is to be our *Hunt-land* after?

Yet remember after all, that theſe are *Cordials* prepared for the *weak* in Faith alone, and not to be ſpilt and caſt away on *Infidels*, that have *no Faith*, but are Caution.

Caſt-aways indeed: No Crumb of the Childrens *Bread* is to be caſt to *Dogs*. *Zuinglius*, after his readings on the Curſes, *Deut.* 27. could ſay, *bone vir hoc nihil ad te*; and after theſe Benedictions pronounced, let me add unto the *Wicked*, [*Evil man, this is nought to thee*]. We have been adminiſtring *Cordials* to the *little ones* of Chriſt, which have but *weak Vitals*, little Faith; but here is nothing for thoſe that have no Faith at all. When Precious Jewels are dropped, and fall in the ſtreets, thoſe are the readieſt to catch and gather them up, who have nothing to do with them: ſuch we give check unto; ſo let us here do, *Hold off hands*, do not finger theſe things by *miſ-applying*, you who want Faith to the Right *applying* of them. *Nothing*, we ſay, hath no *Feauſon*. And though Little by Addition and Multiplication, may mount in time to Much, yet 'tis Arithmetick undoubted, *Of nothing cometh nothing*— *No Faith, no Feauſon*; no ſenſe, ſavour or relliſh of Divine Comforts and Conſolations to ſuch Souls. I add no more.

SECTION

SECTION III.

Increaſe our faith.

THE Second Obſervation, or Truth of Remark from the Text, followeth, *viz.* Obſerv. 2.

Thoſe Minors, *or little Children of God, muſt not always remain* Little Ones, *or reſt in that Eſtate of Minority, but aſpire to an higher Pitch of Perfection of growth, and deſire it.*

He that readeth the Poet, of the Victorious *Cæſar*, ſaying,

——*Semperque Prioribus inſtat*
Nilque putat actum dum quid ſupereſſet agendum.

And ſhall compare therewith what the *More than Conqueror, Paul*, ſaith of himſelf,

ſelf, *Phil.* 3. 13. [*Brethren, I count not my ſelf* perfect, or to have already attained, *but forgetting the things behind, and reaching forth to thoſe before, I preſs forward towards the mark*]; might ſuſpect thoſe Two *Contemporaries*, the *Heathen* and the *Chriſtian*, to be *Cronies*, and well acquainted (for *Paul* was no ſtranger unto *Poets*). In the mean time, that *Turkiſh* device, or *Hieroglyphick*, may *Blazon* the Chriſtian's *Coat of Honour*, *viz.* a *Creſcent*, or *New Moon*, ever in the *Increaſe*, growing to the *Full*, but never in the *Wain*, *impreſſed* with that *Motto*, *Heb.* 6. 1. *Let us go on to perfection.* And the great Apoſtle ſaith no leſs, 1 *Theſ.* 4. 1, 10. *Let us do it more and more.* The *Reaſons* hereof have in them *Reaſon* enough.

Reaſon I. *Firſt*, Becauſe *Faith* is a Vital Grace and *Principle*; *The juſt do live by faith*, *Habak.* 2. 4. Therefore it muſt have in it thoſe *Eſſential Properties* of *Life*, *Growth* and *Motion:* And where that Life is, there muſt be Growth, till it advance to the Pitch of its Perfection; but when it ceaſeth to increaſe, it is upon

upon the *decline* in a dying way: And though in the outward man, and its *Animal Life*, there is a ſtinted ἀκμη, as the *maximum quod ſic*, beyond which no *Hand-breadth*, nor *Hair-breadth* can be added; It is not ſo in the Inner man, and its Spiritual Life; for therein is no ſtint nor meaſure, but that fulneſs of the meaſure *of the ſtature of Chriſt*, *Epheſ.* 4. 11. in which is both Plenitude of *Parts* and of *Degrees*; ſo that it is ever in the *Aſcendant*: even *when the outward man decays, we are renewed in the inner man daily*, 2 *Cor.* 4. 16.

Secondly, God would not that his Children ſhould live by *Faith barely*, but live it at an higher rate *abundantly*, *John* 10. 10. A man may live from hand to mouth, and that *on the bread and water of affliction*: may have juſt ſo much as will hold Soul and body together: And a Chriſtian may have ſo much of that Salt of Saving Faith, as will keep both Soul and Body from ſtinking. But theſe are poor Pittances; for *God hath called us to perfection.* Reaſon 2.

Reaſon 3. *Thirdly*, Though the leaſt Vital Faith be the *Life of the Soul*, it is the greater *Faith* that is the *ſtrength* of the Soul: A *Little Faith* may do a *Little*, and more than man could think; but 'tis *Great Faith* that can do *great Feats*, *Heb.* 11. 32. for it can *do* and *ſuffer* much. The ſmalleſt Cobble, or Paper-boat, may keep one ſafe in a *Summer's gleame* (ſo may a *little Faith*); but it is not equal to higheſt ſtorms and ſurges, nor keep the Soul above water which is ſinking, as we ſee in *Peter* plunged: he was bold enough and venturous, but was ſinking ſoon, becauſe of his Little Faith, 'tis ſaid.

Reaſon 4. *Fourthly*, The going on to Perfection, is not only the Chriſtians *Celeuſma* and cry, *Heb.* 6. 1. but his drift, deſign and deſire: And whoever he be that aimeth at the Mark (as there), if he would hit it, and ſhoot with any *Level*, muſt draw his *Arrow* to the *Head*, with all his ſtrength, and he ſhall not nick the *Pin* neither.

Fifthly,

Fifthly, In this caſe, not to go forward, is really to go backward, which I vouch not by the *Proverb*, *non progredi eſt regredi*, but by the *Prophet*, *Jer.* 1. 24. wherein 'tis ſaid, they *went backwards*, becauſe they went not forwards; and ſo ſaid the Father, Where men ceaſe to be better, they begin to be worſe; and *malus eſt qui melior eſſe non vult*, the Boat which will not *ſtem* the Tide and Stream, is ſure to be carried with them back. Reaſon 5.

Sixthly, *Leſſer Faith*, though it have its poſitive value, is yet of no comparative worth, in compariſon of greater Faith; it is nothing, and can do nothing. We may ſafely ſay that of *leſſer Grace* which the Apoſtle ſaith of Glory, 2 *Cor.* 7. 10. *That glory had in it no glory*, in compariſon of that which excelleth; therefore he accounted all paſt as nothing, in compariſon of the Mark before him, that *Poſt of Perfection*, *Phil.* 3. 13. More Reaſons might be added for *Demonſtration*, but they may better *ſerve* for a *Reſerve of Motives* Reaſon 6.

in the *Application*, to which we haſten.

Application. *Firſt*, This ſerveth for the juſt *Rebuke* of our *Perfectioniſts*, thoſe *ſelf-full* men, indeed *full of Pride and Self-conceit* only, puffed up in their *fleſhly* minds, with that *Tympany* of Folly and Vanity, witneſſing ſo often *Perfection* to us, and more often their *Imperfections*; and ſo *undo* their *ſayings* by their *doings*: And though we could not from their own *Works*, yet from their own *Words* and Mouths we might judge them, from holy *Job*, cap. 9. 20. *If I ſhould ſay, I were perfect, mine own mouth would prove me perverſe.* This minds me of that grave Taunt that *Cicero* gave, when ſome *Romans* laughed to ſcorn a *Stale Virgin* of Forty, becauſe ſhe ſaid ſhe was but Twenty Years of age; *We have cauſe* (ſaid he) *to believe the* Damſel; *for I have heard her ſay the ſame for Truth at leaſt Twenty Years ſince.* Now if this were true, that ſuch have witneſſed Twenty Years ſince, their Perfection, now I fear it is in a woful way by this; what ſo long ſince

was

was *ripe*, muſt needs be rotten now. *Hippocrates* could ſay, That Healths, when at the higheſt pitch, were extreamly hazardous, becauſe (ſaith he) that *Nature's Wheel* (like that of *Fortune*) is ever in *Motion*; it cannot reſt; and if it be not upon the *Aſcendant*, but got unto the *Zenith*, it's upon the *vertical* point of *going down*: And it is as true of *Grace*; and therefore all ſuch as would be perfect, muſt be thus minded, *viz.* That they are *non* yet *vere adepti*, or made perfect, *Phil.* 3. 12. but a *going on to perfection.*

Secondly, This giveth a *Reprimand* to thoſe *moderate* men who are afraid of *over-doing*, and ready enough to liſten to their Maſter's ſaying, *Be not righteous over-much*, *Eccleſ.* 7. 16. as if a moderate thing were the beſt: and becauſe they think they have attained to ſome *Little Faith*, they are willing to continue in their *Minority*, and not ſue out their *Livery*: And if a little Faith will carry us on, and bear our charges to Heaven, why needs any more (ſay they)? This is but a kind of griping and *greedying*?

I an-

I anſwer to this *Laſt*: *Firſt*, That there is a *greedying* in Chriſt's *Little Ones*, becauſe they are much a *growing*, 1 *Pet.* 2. 2. And there is a *Covetouſneſs* which the Apoſtle much commendeth, *in coveting the beſt gifts*, 1 *Cor.* 12. 31. 2*dly*. *Fanciful* men may poſſibly ſo ſay, but never *faithful* men: Were ever any of the Children of God ſo fooliſh, as to be *Children* always, and to continue ſtill in their *Minority*? 3*dly*, A *Little Faith*, if *true*, may as *truly* juſtifie as the greateſt; but *little Faith* will not ſo *throughly* ſanctifie as a greater: A little may *Receive* Righteouſneſs as well, but a little will not *Work* Righteouſneſs ſo well, as is ſaid, *Heb.* 11. 33. A little may bring you a little ſtrength and comfort; but who is in love with a little? A little may give you ſome *Adherence*, but it is not little will help you to *Aſſurance*, *Rom.* 4. 20. *Fourthly*, As to that ſaying, If a little will bear our charges, and bring us to Heaven, what needs more? Have we not ſeen ſome weak and crazed Veſſels, ſore ſhattered, the Maſts broken, and Sales tattered, coming yet ſafe to Land and Harbour: but you

you would not think that man rightly in his Wits, that ſhould chuſe to venture in ſuch a bottom, or ſhould thus ſay, What needs theſe ſtrong Maſts and much Sail? I may arrive as ſafely at the Haven of Happineſs, as the greateſt of our *Fidelio's*, that are carried with a *Plerophory of Aſſurance*, with full *Gales*, *Top and Top-Gallon*; with *Flags* and *Streamers flying*. This poſſibly may ſo prove; but yet theſe Latter *give us an abundant entrance into glory*, in the Apoſtle's Expreſſion, 2 *Pet.* 1. 6, 7, 10.

Thirdly, But if this be Truth, ſuffer this word of *Exhortation*, as the main. All you then that are Chriſtians indeed, and not in *Name* only, the little Children of God, reſt not ever in that dwarfiſh Eſtate of *Minority*, but preſs to that higher pitch of *Perfect Men* in the growth and increaſe of Faith; otherwiſe that Faith is as imperfect as your ſelves: Whereas St. *Peter* exhorts his Children to truſt perfectly, 1 *Pet.* 1.13. (for ſo the Original may be rendred) *Let Faith*, as well as Patience, *and every other grace, have its perfect working*, as

Exhortation.

as he exhorts, 2 *Pet.* 3. 18. *Grow in grace*, and in this Topping Grace eſpecially, praying as the Apoſtles here, *O Lord increaſe our faith.* And unto thoſe Reaſons that backed this Truth in the *Demonſtration*, take theſe Motives for to edge it in the following *Motive-Conſiderations.*

Motive 1. *Firſt*, Faith is a Chriſtian's Guelt, Wealth, Caſh and Coyn; for he is ſaid to be *Rich* in Faith. Now he that hath but a ſingle Penny in his Purſe, cannot be ſaid a *moneyleſs* man; and his *Penny* is as good Silver as he that hath *Tuns* or *Talents*: Nay, that *Penny* hath *Cæſar's Image* upon it; and therein is equal to Crowns, and it will paſs with God for payment. But I hope you account not every *Penny-man* a Rich man, or a Noble man; he is but a poor man for all that. 'Tis ſo with him that hath the leaſt of Saving Faith, *Live* by Faith he may, but he lives but poorly (not abundantly), at a low rate: And it is not many of theſe Pence nor Pounds that make a man indeed to be Rich in Faith; ſuch we may put amongſt the *Penny-wiſe.*

Se-

Secondly, The more any Chriſtian hath of Faith, the more he hath of Life, and is more lively, and the more he hath of Chriſt; not that Chriſt is to be *anatomized* (for the leaſt have Chriſt, and the whole Chriſt); but the more he hath of Chriſt (that is not ὑποστατικῶς, but ἐνεργητικῶς), the more of the Power and Sweetneſs of Chriſt, the more conſolation of ſuch a Saviour: not but that every Soul may have ſo much of Chriſt as its narrow hand can graſp; but the whole Chriſt, in his *unfathomable* ſweetneſs, is too big to be encloſed in mortal *Arms*, for all that *Simeon* aſſayed once to do it, *Luke* 1. 28. Now the ſtronger the hand of Faith, the more it ſqueezeth out the Eſſence of divine ſweetneſs; and they being the Arms of Faith which embrace him, the longer and ſtronger theſe Arms are, the more they graſp of him: And this makes the Faithful complain, that their graſp is not big enough, and their Faith (the Arm of the Lord, called *Iſa.* 53. 1.) is not longimanous enough. Motive 2.

Thirdly,

Motive 3. *Thirdly*, The more of Faith, the more you glorify God (as it is ſaid of *Abraham*'s ſtrong Faith, *Rom.* 4.20.) the more you bear of Fruit, the more he is glorified, *John* 15. 8. and as God gives Faith this Glory above every Grace, to be that eſpouſing-Grace, Faith returns that Glory upon God; for by ſo poor a Grace, God cannot be robbed of any Glory; none but God can boaſt by ſuch a bargain, no *Fleſh can Glory*, *Eph.* 2. 9.

Motive 4. *Fourthly*, The more hereby you gratify the Free-Grace of God, for it muſt be Grace alone, if Faith be any thing, and ſo poor a thing advanced, as in the aboveſaid place.

Motive 5. *Fifthly*, The more you grow in *Faith*, the more you grow up into the *Favour* of God; as men turn their Eyes to behold and admire a fruitful Tree, God turns the Eye of his Favour on ſuch; and the more Faith advanceth us to a greater degree of favour ſtill: This Faith made *Jacob*'s Name ſo famous for a *Wreſtler*; this made two Gentiles, the one a Captain or Centurion, but the other a weak Woman, bear ſo great a

Figure in God's Book; for to the one he ſaith, *O Woman, great is thy faith*, Mat. 15. 28. and to the other, *I have not found ſo great faith, no not in Iſrael*, Matth. 8. 10.

Sixthly, The more of Faith, the more of Love and Charity, as in the Suburbs of the Text; the more of Joy, Hope, Peace and Comfort, Rom. 15. 13: *The God of hope fill you with all peace and joy through believing.* And it is no wonder, Faith being that *Mother-grace* that *teemeth* out ſo many fair Daughters, all Maids of Honour. Motive 6.

Seventhly, The ſtronger Faith, the more powerful and effectual your Prayers, as we ſee in *Jacob*, who in wreſtling by Prayers and Supplications, had power over the Almighty, *Hoſ.* 13. 4. One therefore ſaid of that man of Faith and Confidence, *Luther*, *Divinus ille vir potuit quod voluit*; He might have had what he would; and if the Expreſſion be too *Romantick* for him, it was not ſo for one of a weaker make, the Woman of *Canaan*, Mat. 15. 21. *Be it to thee as thou wilt*, ſaith Chriſt. Motive 7.

Eighthly,

Motive 8. *Eighthly*, You may have what you pleaſe, you may do what you will; for as Faith is the Life of the Soul, this great Faith is the ſtrength of the Soul, and can do great Feats, *Heb.* 11. 33. *Great things* (ſaith *David*) *are ſpoken of thee, thou City of God*; but greater much are there ſaid of this Grace of God; and no wonder, *for as the man is, ſo is his ſtrength*, ſaid he to *Gideon*, *Judg.* 8. 21.

Motive 9. *Ninthly*, It carries all before it; What got *Abraham* by a ſtrong Faith? To be reputed the Flower of Men, and *Father of Nations?* What loſt *Moſes* by a weak one? The Poſſeſſion of the Land of Promiſe.

Motive 10. *Tenthly*, Strong Faith will do more with weak Parts, than weak Faith can do with the ſtrongeſt and ſharpeſt Parts; for if the Blade be dull, a little more of the ſtrength of Faith will do it, *Eccleſ.* 10. 10.

Motive 11. *Eleventhly*, Strong Faith breeds you ſtrong Conſolation and Aſſurance, *Rom.* 4. 20. which a weak one never can; and it is able to encounter Difficulties, Improbabilities, nay Impoſſibilities (as in *Abraham*'s caſe) with a *Certum eſt*

† *quia*

quia impoſſibile eſt; it can revive a *calcined Iſaac*, eaſilier than Chymiſts can do Plants from their own Aſhes. For what elſe was *Abraham*'s meaning in going to offer *Iſaac*, *Tarry here* (ſaid he) *till I and the lad go ſacrifice, and we will come to you again?* It is able to encounter the moſt difficult Duties, too hard for Fleſh and Blood, as appeareth in the ſame caſe; nay, from the very Context; as to forgive Offenders, *toties quoties*, to ſeventy ſeven times *per* day; as if the Apoſtles ſhould reply upon it, Lord give us Faith, and then much may be; but otherwiſe it is not poſſible.

Twelfthly, It will rid you of all thoſe *Annoyances* and *Incumbrances* that a weak Faith is obnoxious unto, as 1. Fears and Doubtings; how ſoon is one affrighted out of a little Faith! as our Saviours words import, *Why did ye fear, O ye of little Faith?* 2*dly*, *Tribulations*; Faith fears no Famine, (ſaid *Tertullian*) nor fears, it that Highway-man ruſhing in upon it, *Poverty*; becauſe God hath choſen the *poor of the World to be rich in Faith* (ſaith the Spirit). Others poſſi- Motive 12.

bly under all theſe may be ſtill, ſilent, and Stoically Patient; *but we* (ſaith the Apoſtle) *rejoice in Tribulations*, which is much more. This made *Lipſius* a great *Stoick*, pray after all, *Da mihi domine Patientiam Chriſtianam.* 3*dly*, In Temptations on the right hand and the left, 1 *John* 2. 13, 14. Strong Faith makes men greater then *Alexander* in *overcoming of the World*; nay, we (ſaith St. *Paul*) ὑπερνικῶμεν, are far above all Conquerors, *Rom.* 8. 37. 4*ly*, Corruptions; Feeble Faiths, like too weak States, are obnoxious to the Incurſions of bordering Enemies, which Potent *Empires* are not; and as in the Spring-time, the more the Day and Light encreaſeth, the more the Night and Power of Darkneſs ſtill decreaſeth; ſo it is in the increaſe of Grace, and in this eſpecially. 5*thly*, In *Scandals* and Offences taken in our Converſations; The Weak ſtumble at every Stone, nay Straw, and often know not at what they ſtumble, *Prov.* 4. 19. but the ſtrong can ſtep over ſuch Stones of Offence.

Thirteenth-

Thirteenthly, Faith (if in Minority) weakeneth all your Acts; A Minor is in Law diſabled, and can do nothing, becauſe he is a Minor; but when he is out of *Non-age*, and come to perfect Age, he can do every thing. But Motiv. 13.

Laſtly, There is yet one Conſideration more; It is not the leaſt, yet I make it the *laſt*, becauſe we ſhall not find it till the *laſt*; it is what dying men will one day find, and therefore the living ſhould lay it to heart, *viz.* all you that are weak, will one day find, when you are much weaker than now you are, what need you'll have of a ſtrong Faith to encounter ſtrong Pains, and Death that Prince of fears; when you ſhall turn away your Faces to the Wall and weep, *Iſa.* 38. 2. *Hezekiah*'s faith will then be more to you than *Hezekiah*'s Kingdom: You'll need a ſtrong Faith and Patience too (or you'll be much overmatch'd) even a Faith ſtronger than Death, that will *cleave to Chriſt* to the laſt Gaſp, when your Souls are ready to *cleave to the Duſt*. This hath a preſent Impreſſion upon mine Motiv. 14.

own Spirit; and take it for Truth from one that hath paid full dear for it, it hath coſt ſome Prayers and Tears, and I find mine own name in the number of thoſe Fools, who ſay, *non putaram*: I did not think till now (dear Friends) the need there was in *Death*, of a *Faith* even ſtronger than Death: Now wind up all theſe ends upon the firſt bottom, and let them perſuade you to preſs more and more for a greater growth in Faith, ſaying, *O Lord, increaſe our Faith.*

The Teſt, or Examination. But becauſe ſome here may move the Queſtion, How ſhall I know whether my Faith be weak, or it is of a competent ſtrength? It is but fit that I offer unto all the *Teſt*, who bear any Place or Office in Chriſt his myſtical Body, and this ſhall be as a word of Tryal by way of *Examination.* Take only the Minutes and ſhorter Notes of things highly momentous; and to prevent misjudgings, two cautionary Inſtructions ſhould ever be premiſed.

Firſt,

Firſt, Senſe at the beſt, is a very in- Cautions.
competent Judg in Faith, and matters of Faith.

Secondly, Thoſe that would take their true Size and Height, muſt not meaſure by falſe Standards, of which we may have occaſion after to enlarge; and theſe being here but hinted, the following *Teſts* will not eaſily deceive thoſe that have a mind to try them, and thereby their own ſtrength alſo.

Firſt, When men are induced to be- Tryal 1.
lieve in Chriſt on ſmaller terms and grounds of Conviction, this argueth their Faith to be of a ſtronger Infuſion; and ſuch perſwaſion cometh from him *that hath called them*; of this *Nathanael* is an inſtance and evidence, to whom Chriſt ſaid, *John* 1. 20. becauſe I ſaw thee under the *Fig-tree*, *believeſt thou? thou ſhalt ſee greater things than theſe*; it is hard to divine what this Privy-token was; but ſome rationally Conjecture that this was a ſolemn, yet ſecret Vow by the Perſon made under a Fig-tree, whereof none but God and his own heart could be conſcious. And our

Saviour by this saying, shewed himself to be the καρδιογνώστης, or trier of Reins; this was sufficient to ground indeed the Faith of common *Credence*, that Christ was God, but not to effect that saving Faith in him, as Saviour and Messiah, without greater things; yet he was truly a Believer of the first rate and rank.

Tryal 2. *Secondly*, (Which is like unto the former) That Faith is strong, which wanting a particular Promise, can hang and depend upon a particular Providence or Precept; and can hold fast, when it hath so little to hold by. The three Children in *Dan.* 3. 17. exemplify this, for they had no particular promise of deliverance, but yet could rest upon this Security, That God would deliver them out of the furnace. When Faith like the Earth is founded on nothing, yet still proveth firm and immoveable, poised with its own strength, this shews it to be strong and weighty.

Tryal 3. *Thirdly*, That Faith is strong, which can overmatch fears and doubting; and is of an high Elevation, near to the third Heavens indeed, if got above the Sphere of

of *Trepidation*; ſuch was *Abraham's* Faith, *Rom.* 4. 20. being ſtrong in Faith he ſtaggered not, doubted, diſputed not; but *Abraham* his Shooe will not fit the foot of every little Child of his, who both fears and complains: In the mean time this argueth weakneſs, for it is a known Rule in Natural Philoſophy, *Omne infirmum eſt natura querulum & tremulum*; and ſuch as are ſo tremulous and querulous may be yet worthy Saints of Jeſus, but weaker ones for the ſame reaſon.

Fourthly, That is a ſtrong Faith that dare out-face Dangers and Death it ſelf, the terrible of terribles. Such was St. *Paul's* Faith in daring Death, *O Death where is thy Sting?* and ſuch St. *Stephen's* that *Proto-martyr*, who deſpiſed thoſe Hail-ſtones which were ready to knock him down, *Acts* 7. And why? 'Tis anſwered, *Acts* 6. 5. *He was full of the Holy Ghoſt and Faith*; he had that ſtrong Eye of Faith that could pierce into Heaven, and ſee the Heavens open, *Acts* 7. 55. But on the other ſide, if *thou fainteſt in the day of battel* (when to encounter the laſt Enemy) *thy ſtrength is but weakneſs*, Prov. 24. 10. Tryal 4.

Fifthly,

Tryal 5. *Fifthly*, The more that Faith is influenced by the pure Promiſes of God, and the leſs from carnal Counſels and Conſultations, the ſtronger is the Faith. In the fore-cited caſe of *Abraham*'s Faith, *Rom.* 4. 20. which could hope againſt hope, of whom it might be ſaid, *Sola ſalus miſero nullam ſperare ſalutem*; his Faith did not grapple with things difficult but improbable; and *tantum non impoſſibile*, it being *an hundred to* one on *Natures ſide*, yet he took the *odds*, and won the prize.

Tryal 6. *Sixthly*, Which is of like Cognation, *adhering* and *cleaving* to Chriſt in deſpight of all Diſcouragements; and to hope even againſt hope, as before, is made the Demonſtration of a ſtrong Faith. Such was *Abraham*'s, and ſuch *David*'s, under the moſt uncomfortable Suppoſition that any Soul can ſuppoſe [*though God ſhall ſay, I take no pleaſure in thee*, 2 *Sam.* 15. 26.] Thoſe that think no Faith ſtrong, which hath no ſtrong Aſſurance, are much miſtaken. Witneſs the Woman of *Canaan* in her crying after Chriſt, *Mat.* 17.

Firſt,

Firſt, Chriſt gave her no *hearing* or *Countenance*: Then he *diſcountenanced* her by a denial, uſing her as a Dog; and ſo calling her in effect: but this maketh her ſummon up all her *ſtrength*, and take heart and courage from it, retorting the Argument; ſhe *cleaves* to him, as not to be ſhaken off; and for this, ſaith he, *O woman, great is thy faith*: For that is ſtrong Faith that dare venture all, and that without *Enſurance*.

Seventhly, When the ſight of the Eye of Faith is ſtrong, and yet the light but little, this argueth a ſtrong Faith; for a *weak ſight* can diſcern little but in a full and clear light; but a ſtrong Eye can read a ſmaller Print without *Spectacles*, and that in the very twy-light. This was the caſe of many *Martyrs*, our *Fore-fathers*; they lived in darker times than we, yet were able to diſcern the Truth, and die for it too, though they could not ſo well diſpute for it as we can do: Here was a *Faith* and *Love* too, ſtronger than death. Tryal 7.

Eighthly,

Tryal 8. *Eighthly*, When the Eye of *Faith* is not only *ſtrong ſighted*, but *long-ſighted*, to ſee things a-far off, at the greateſt diſtance, which are out of the *ken* and proſpect of mortal eyes, piercing through all thoſe *Clouds*, nay, *Mountains* that interpoſe. This was the ſtrong Faith of the *Primitive Patriarchs*, *Heb.* 11. 13. They *ſaw thoſe Promiſes we enjoy* at the remoteſt diſtance of ſo many hundred years.

Tryal 9. *Ninthly*, That is a ſtrong Faith that is a *ſtrong-crying* Faith. The crying of a Child is a Proof of its Life in Law and Nature both; therefore Judges uſually enquire of a Child born, *Did it cry?* And the ſtrength of Children we rationally judge of by *crying* ſtrongly; for this ſheweth them to be ſtrong: And I ſuppoſe *Moſes*, *Exod.* 2. 6. did not *whimper*, being ſtrong indeed. However, we read of the ſtrong *Crys* and Prayers of one that was no *weakling*, *Heb.* 5. 7. *Who in the days of his Fleſh offered up prayers and ſupplications to his heavenly Father, with ſtrong crying.* And the Woman of *Canaan* was ready to pierce the Ears of the Diſciples in crying

crying after Chriſt, of whom he ſaid, *O woman, great is thy faith.*

Tenthly, Faith is ſtrong that can digeſt the hardeſt things: as, 1. The ſtrongeſt Truths; for ſtrong Conſtitutions are known by digeſting the ſtrongeſt *meats*. This is St. *Paul*'s Teſt, *Heb.* 5. 12, 13. *The weak are for weak meats* only, as *milk*; but the ſtrong for the *ſtrongeſt Truths*. 2. The τὰ σκληρὰ (as the Apoſtle calls them), hard words, *Affronts* and *Perſecutions*, and ſuch like *hard things*, a ſtrong Faith can digeſt theſe alſo, forgiving their Enemies *toties quoties*, if they have this *increaſe of Faith*, as the Text implies; and ſoon conquer all *vindictive Paſſions*. This is *Solomon*'s Teſt, and is a real indication of one that is truly ſtrong, *Prov.* 16. 32. and 25. 28. Strong Paſſions ſpeak the weaker Faith, and the weaker Paſſions the ſtronger Faith. Tryal 10.

Eleventhly, That is a ſtrong Faith that hath the ſtronger Appetite to its ſpiritual Food, though never ſo plain, if it be but wholeſome Food; and it is a ſqueazy Faith that is for Kickſhaws and Dainties, that thinks no Bread fine Tryal 11.

and white enough: for though there be like Appetite in weak Children, 1 *Pet.* 2. 1. yet there is a ſtronger Appetite in the ſtronger; and ſtrength of Appetite argueth the ſtrength of Conſtitution, as well ſpiritual as natural.

Tryal 12. *Twelfthly*, Strength of Faith may be gueſſed by men's *Communications*; for there is a change of voice in thoſe who from *Puſillage* are growing to *Manhood:* and the like change of *Communication* is diſcernable in thoſe more grown in Grace: *When I was a child, I ſpake as a child*, ſaid the Apoſtle, 1 *Cor.* 13. 11. And if men's Communications continue *worldly*, they themſelves are moſtly ſo, 1 *John* 4. 5. *They are of the world, therefore ſpeak they of the world.* Such are Strangers to that Faith that *overcometh this world*, 1 *John* 5. 4. Such are but *Galilæans*, their Speech *bewrayeth them.*

Tryal 13. *Thirteenthly*, Uniform Growth argueth ſtrength of Faith; for according to one's growth, ſuch is naturally one's ſtrength; yet men may grow, and not be ſtrong at all: *Hectical* and *Conſumptive* Perſons ſhoot up faſt in height, but

but not in breadth; and *Weaklings* in the *Rickets* grow great in the Head and Joynts only. The weak in Faith may *ſhoot up* faſt in knowledge; but ſuch are not grown, but *puffed up* rather to a *Tympany*; ſo the Apoſtle, 1 *Cor.* 8. 7. *Knowledge puffeth up.* To grow indeed, is to grow *uniformly*, *upwards* in Knowledge, and *downwards* in Humility (as is implied, *Mark* 4. 5. *Iſa.* 37. 31.) for 'tis this that giveth *rooting* and ſtrength to Faith.

Fourteenthly, Theſe are the ſtrong that are the leaſt *offended* at things in their Nature indifferent. *Giving of Scandal* and Offence, is an Expreſſion of much noiſe in our preſent World, and uſed by thoſe that neither underſtand the word nor thing; who as little conſider who they are that take it; and if they did, they would diſcard the practice; for to be ſcandalized, in the Apoſtle's ſenſe, is to ſin and fall, and to be thereto induced by the Examples of the ſtronger: And if ſo, 1. Theſe are incident to the weak: but thoſe that *complain* of this the moſt, would *complain* yet more, ſhould we take them for Tryal 14.

for weak Chriſtians. 2. Such, of all other, are in leaſt danger of being induced to fall, by the Examples of ſuch as they complain of; for ſuch they do not much admire for ſtrong, nor do they ſo much love and eſteem them. 3. Such as ſay they take *offence*, truly muſt own, that they are ſinners in ſo doing; and are obliged to repent; for by theſe men are really weak, and made weak, ſaith the unerring Apoſtle, *Rom.* 14. 23.

Tryal 15. *Fifteenthly*, That is ſtrong Faith where the heart *beats ſtrongly* after God. *Strong Pulſes* are the trueſt indications of *ſtrongeſt Vitals*; *viz.* which go conſtantly and ſteadily on in all their duties and motions, without interruption. Such conſtant going of the Watch, argueth the main *Spring* to be ſtrong; and ſo on the contrary.

Tryal 16. *Sixteenthly*, That is ſtrong Faith that holds cloſe to God in ſeeming *deſertions*, when the Soul is to encounter God, as an Enemy, no leſs than Satan; and then to bear the ſhock of both their Forces united (as *Job* did), and to ſtand upon ones feet ſtill; herein is ſtrength.

ſtrength. So it is ſaid of *Jacob*, *Hoſ.* 12. 3. by *main ſtrength* he had power with God. But theſe I lightly touch, being handled before.

Laſtly, *Strong Faith* can do *ſtrong things*, *any thing*, *every thing*; *nothing* is too hard for it, ſaith Chriſt, *Mat.* 17. 20. *For as a man is, ſo is his ſtrength.* Rich Faith will be *rich* in good works too, and *ſtrong Faith* will be as *ſtrong* in Love and Charity; for it *works by Love*: and the *modus operandi ſequitur modum eſſendi*; that which is truly ſtrong, worketh ſtrongly; and that which is *little*, can do but *little.* I mention this, becauſe many that pretend to *all Faith*, are herein much failing, *have not all Charity.* Charity they expreſs, but it's only in giving, and that only to thoſe of their own Fraternity and Perſuaſion; but the Goſpel-Mercy and Charity, which Chriſt teacheth, is more univerſal, extenſive, and in all its Numbers compleat: 1. In *Giving*, and in being merciful to all, the *juſt and unjuſt*, after the Example of our Heavenly Father. 2. In *Forgiving*, and that not to Seven times *per* day (as here in the Tryal 17.

the Text), but to Seventy Seven times. 3. In *judging and cenſuring mercifully*; all which are thus diſtributed, *Luke* 6. 36, 37, 38.

Now by theſe many Teſts rightly applied, men may ſoon try the Truth of their Conditions, whether they be *ſtrong* or *feeble in Faith*: And let theſe ſuffice for *Examination*.

Qu. How to grow and Increaſe.

There is one Queſtion more that naturally followeth upon the former; *viz. What a weak Believer ſhould do in order to the obtaining this Increaſe and Strength of Faith?* Which would bring me unto my laſt *Stage*; for the Third Obſervation from the Text, makes anſwer to it in part; *viz. That Prayer is a moſt preſſing and prevalent Expedient thereunto.* But this is only *One of Many*; and therefore I will rather anſwer the Queſtion at large, and ſhall keep this for the laſt reſerve, to bring up the *Rear*. Now this Province is adorned beſt, and the Task abſolved under theſe Two Heads: 1. By *Remotion*, in ſeveral *Cautions*. 2. By *Poſition*, in more particular *Directions*.

Firſt, By way of Caution, ſuch as would grow and be ſtrong, let them beware of Sin, the Temptations to, and Pleaſures of Sinning; for theſe *Dalilah*'s do lend their *Laps* for ſinful *Dalliances* to lull the Soul aſleep, yet at the ſame time find the *Scizzers* that cut off the Hairs of *Sampſon*'s head; and theſe leave even *Reubens*, the chief of Men for Strength and Excellency, *weaker* than *Water*. The Wiſe man was ſtrong (ſaith *Solomon*) and ſo was the Speaker; but he ſpent his ſtrength on Women, contrary to the Counſel of his Indulgent Mother, who might foreſee it by a Spirit of Prophecy, *Prov.* 31. 3. and the Father calleth Sin properly, ἀῤῥωστία τῆς ψυχῆς, the Souls Diſeaſe and Infirmity; for that infirmates, and makes weak the Soul, leaving it low; nay, it brings not only private Perſons, but Kings and Kingdoms low, *Prov.* 14. 34. Caution 1.

Secondly, Beware of Returns and Relapſes into Sin; and after your repentings for Sins committed, the recommitting thoſe Sins repented of; for Relapſes do much impair us; they take us when weak, and make us much the Caution 2.

weaker, and are able to bring the ſtrongeſt down.

Caution 3. *Thirdly*, Beware of offering the leaſt Violence to Conſcience (that delicate thing!) by being drawn on to Sin through the Examples of others, tho you deem them ſtronger and abler Chriſtians than your ſelves. For that is not the point; Men have Faith, as well as Faces, Complexion, all which others cannot have: *Haſt thou Faith, have it to thy ſelf.* (ſaith the Apoſtle concerning meats, *Rom.* 14. 22.) *Muſhrooms*, *Melons* and *Cucumbers*, which the ſtrongeſt can digeſt with ſafety, unto the weak may prove both dangerous and deadly; there being ſomething, not ſo much in the nature of the things, as in their own Breaſts, which make theſe Piquant to the Conſcience and inward Man; and by ſuch Offences, the weak are ſtill *made more weak*, Rom. 14. 21.

Caution 4. *Fourthly*, Beware of falſe-heartedneſs, 'tis this that makes faint-heartedneſs and weakneſs. *The ſinners in Sion are afraid; fearfulneſs hath ſurprized the hypocrites* (ſaid the Prophet, *Iſa.* 33. 14.)

14.) And this falſe heart maketh a feeble heart, Ezek. 16. 30. *How weak is thy heart, like an imperious woriſh woman.* Now whores, eſpecially imperious ones, are brazen-faced, and not ſo ſoft, if they were not conſcious to themſelves of their Falſhood and Diſloyalty to their Lords and Husbands. And whereas *Solomon* ſaith, *The wiſe are ſtrong*; 'tis rather true of the upright, and ſincerely ſo; for uprightneſs is both the wiſdom and ſtrength of every Chriſtian. None being ſo ſtrong as that man that walketh *upright*; for he is that *firm* and *downright* man (as we call ſuch) a true *Nathanael*, in *whoſe heart there is no guile*, and he ſhall be ſure to ſee ſtill greater things, as is ſaid of him, *Joh.* 1. 50.

Fifthly, Beware of *Self-Confidence*. Caution 5. The weak Child that is confident of his own Strength, and would be going by himſelf, gets a fall, and is thereby made *weaker*, for ſuch are even foiled and prove feeble, *Iſa.* 40. 29. the *youths ſhall faint*; but of that hereafter.

Sixthly, Beware of thoſe many *Suckers*, Caution 6. which inſenſibly derive and draw

away the *ſap* and *ſtrength* of the ſoul from the Root of Faith; theſe being oppoſite both to the life and growth of Faith; for no Plant can put forth to any purpoſe, till ſuch *Suckers* (which prey upon the Root) be firſt *rooted* out; of this nature are the following.

Firſt, Natural Senſe; this is an oppoſite to that Spiritual Grace: *The juſt live by faith, and not by ſenſe*, 2 *Cor.* 5. 7. He who takes the trueſt aim at a Mark, doth it by one Eye; and it is that ſingle Eye of *Faith* that Chriſt commendeth. *The other Eye of Senſe* giveth but diſtraction, making the Soul to Squint, if we ſhut it not in deſigning at the Glory of God; and it renders Faith indeed more difficult, for it is hard in ſuch to believe *God further than they can ſee him*, which is an Argument of high diſtruſt, and therefore it is a very little Faith that one can put in his Eye, as was ſaid before.

Secondly, Ambitious deſires after *Vain-glory* inſtead of ſeeking the Glory of God; ſuch are hungry *Camelions* that feed on ſuch popular Air, which much rather

rather *thin* than *fatten Faith*, Joh. 5. 44. *How can ye believe* (ſaith Chriſt) *which receive honour one of another, and ſeek not that honour that cometh from God only?*

Thirdly, *Covetous* and *Carking-cares.* Theſe are the Canker of the Soul, which eat into the Core or Heart (as the word *Cura* importeth), and our Saviour's Sermon argueth no leſs, *Mat.* 6. 30. *Take no thought; and why are ye careful?* and if *God feed the Ravens, will he not much more feed you, O ye of little faith?* Theſe argue Faith the leſs, and they make it leſs; nay, of all *Suckers*, this is the worſt, the Spirit calls it the root of all Evil, that over-runneth the Garden, and choaketh the Herb of Grace it ſelf, 1 *Tim.* 6. 10.

Fourthly, *Carnal Fears.* Fear followeth Faith, as the Smoke doth the Fair, and are no Friends but Foes unto it; and do exceedingly much ſpend the incomes of a Chriſtian's comforts; therefore the Scripture maketh Faith and Fear Antagoniſts, *Luke* 8. 50. *Fear not, but believe*; and *Iſa.* 35. 4. God ſaith to the feeble, *Be ſtrong, fear not*; for that

Coward betrayeth thoſe Comforts, Counſels and Succors, which *Courage* and *Reaſon offer*, ſaid the wiſe *Jew*, *Wiſdom*, 17. 12. And tho *Joſhua* was a faithful and a gallant Man, yet he is bid above ſixty times, *Be ſtrong and couragious*; for fear weakeneth Faith.

Laſtly, In ſhort, all Creature-dependencies; theſe are deſtructive to Faith, and to that ſole dependency of Souls, and is no leſs than Idolatry, being an adoring the *Creature* inſtead of the *Creator*; and hard it is for ſuch as truſt in theſe *Idols* of *Silver* and *Gold*, theſe uncertain Riches, to truſt in God; for tho two *Crutches* may hold up the weak, two *Stools* uſually throw them down. And there's odds enough betwixt truſting to the Reeds of *Egypt*, and the Rock of *Iſrael*, as they are compared. In the mean time theſe claſping about Men's hearts (like *Ivy* about tender and hopeful Plants) bereave them of their Sap and Growth, and hug them to Death by their unkindly Embraces; nay, this may be ſaid of thoſe moſt courtly of all Dependencies, be they never

never ſo great: Faith is ſtill the leſs by them. The *Pſalmiſt* therefore ſoundeth a ſeaſonable retreat to all Courtiers, (and it were well if all ſuch would hear that joyful ſound, and give over their too eager a purſuit after *Grandeur*, or Vanity rather, and not to make Court to Shades) and maketh *Court-Faith* and *Chriſtian-Faith* grand oppoſites; ſo *Pſ.* 146. 3, 5. Put not *your truſt in Princes, in whom is no help*; the word is [*in ingenious ones*] tho never ſo ingenious, *for their breath goeth out of them*; and all their golden thoughts with them, of making great their Favourites; *But happy is he that hath the God of Jacob for his hope*; he is true indeed, powerful and bountiful, as it followeth.

Secondly, By way of Poſition, take theſe more poſitive Inſtructions.

Firſt, To begin with that leading Grace, get *Knowledg*; *Above all thy gettings, get that* (ſaith *Solomon*), if you would be great men indeed, *Prov.* 4. 7. and as to this, he ſpeaks ſtill more, *Prov.* 24. 5. *The wiſe are ſtrong, and increaſe* Direct. 1.

creaſe in ſtrength; this is true of men, who by ſtrength of Wit can tame and conquer the ſtrongeſt Creatures (ſaith St. *James*); 'tis true of Corporations of Men, States and Kingdoms, as the *Venetian State*, which ſo many years hath been ſupported by two things only, the *Sea* and their *Sage Councils* of *State*. But when we ſpeak of *Wiſdom* and *Knowledg*, as the ſtrength of Men; Chriſtians muſt read it of the Knowledg of Chriſt, who is called *Wiſdom* it ſelf, *Prov.* 8. and therefore the Apoſtle adviſing them to grow in Grace, 2 *Pet.* 3. 18. points them to the Knowledg of Chriſt in peculiar; and in *Cap.* 1. 2. He directs them to this as the *Well-ſpring*; *All Grace be multiplied to you, through the knowledg of God and Jeſus Chriſt.* All this Faith importeth.

Direct. 2. *Secondly*, In order thereunto, mind your meat, and have an appetite to your ſpiritual food, the Word of God; for even Children thus grow ſtrong, 1 *Pet.* 2. 2. It is food that maketh growth, and ſtrong feeding, ſtrong Men; and ſuch as go up to the Worſhip of God, are ſaid to go from ſtrength to ſtrength, from

from the ſtrength of one Ordinance to the ſtrength of another, (ſay ſome Interpreters) *they grow ſtronger and ſtronger*, *Pſal.* 84. 5. and none indeed outgrow Ordinances, except thoſe overgrown *Monſters* of men, *Ranters* and ſuch like *Leviathans*, who muſt therein confeſs they are paſt both their Growth and Goodneſs, and growing downwards; and to promote this Growth and ſtronger Appetite alſo, God doth not glut and cloy Men with luſcious Dainties always, but giveth us variety of Gifts in our *Paſtors* and *Teachers*, to whet this Appetite more, till men have attained and come up to the fulneſs of their *Meaſure* and *Stature* in Chriſt, and are grown up as high as Heaven; that Scripture is expreſs, *Epheſ.* 4. 12, 14. And as ſmaller Plants of Graſs grow up by daily Dews, it is ſo with Plants of Righteouſneſs that are daily bedewed with Divine Doctrine, ſtill diſtilling in golden Showers, and dropping like ſmall dew upon the Graſs (as *Moſes* ſpake, *Deut.* 32. 2.) And this ſaid the Prophet, *Hoſ.* 14. 5. I'le be a *dew to Iſrael*, *and they ſhall*

ſhall grow as Lillies: And St. *John*, writing to all ſizes of Chriſtians, gives this as the Character of the ſtrong, *The young men they mind their meat and ſpiritual food*, ſaith he, *they have kept my word*, 1 *John* 2. 14.

Direct. 3. *Thirdly*, Remember to add to your Spiritual Food, Spiritual Exerciſe; be much in the Exerciſe of Faith, if you would have Faith, and improve it; *Uſe Limbs and have Limbs* (we ſay): And Members themſelves will dry and pine away, if without uſe. *Powers are perfected by Acts* (ſaith the Philoſopher). How did the *Greeks* improve their *Gymnaſts*, or Champions, to that *Athletick* Habit of Strength, but by continual combating and wreſtling? And of *Milo* it is writ, that by inuring himſelf each morning to rear a Calf, he could bear him up when a grown Bull; for as his burden did gradually and inſenſibly advance, ſo did his own *Puiſſance* and Vigour: The Apoſtle therefore, ſpeaking of the ſtrong, *Heb.* 5. 14. mentions not only *ſtrong meats*, but *ſtrong Exerciſes*, as requiſite.

Fourthly,

Fourthly, To direct the former, exerciſe your Faith by imploying it upon its proper Object; for that is the Maxime [*Potentiæ perficiuntur per actus & objecta*]; Not only Acts but Objects improve natural Powers, and Spiritual no leſs. Now to direct to the Objects of *Faith*, they are theſe: 1. *Chriſt* and his *Perſon*. God indeed is the general Object of Faith in the Old Teſtament, when Chriſt was not ſo fully revealed; *let them ſtay themſelves upon their God*, ſaid the Prophet, *Iſa.* 50. 10. But Chriſt now is more immediately the Object of it, *Acts* 20. 21. It's ſaid, *Repentance towards God, and faith towards Jeſus Chriſt*: as if Faith rather ſingled out this Second Perſon of the Trinity. And this is Faith of the *New Teſtament-ſtrain*, which fixeth not only on the Promiſes of Chriſt, but on the very Perſon of Chriſt, who is the *Grand Promiſe*, in which all the Promiſes meet and center,, being *Yea and Amen in Chriſt* (as is ſaid, 2 *Cor.* 11. 29.) And it is through his Perſon, that the very Promiſe of Pardon it ſelf is offered, 1 *Cor.* 15. 11. 2. The Paſſion of Chriſt, as well Direct. 4.

well as his Perſon; therefore called *Faith in his Blood*; particularly, *Rom.* 3. 24. 3. The Reſurrection of Chriſt, on which the Apoſtle bottoms his Faith and Aſſurance with a μᾶλλον, *yea rather, that is riſen again*, ſaith he, *Rom.* 8. 34. and that on good reaſon; becauſe the Reſurrection of Chriſt, gives not only Evidence, that the Father's Juſtice is ſatisfied, and ſatisfaction given to the full (otherwiſe Death had detained ſtill the Priſoner; and on this point St. *Paul* triumpheth, and cries, *Victoria*, 1 *Cor.* 15. 56.) but becauſe of the influence alſo that the *living Head* giveth to the *living Members*. And if Chriſt be *not riſen and quickned*, we ſhould *yet be dead in our ſins*, and *under water*, 1 *Cor.* 15. 17. 4. His *Interceſſion*. This St. *Paul* adds *ad corroborandum*, to corroborate ſtill *Faith*, *Rom.* 8. 35. *It is Chriſt that died, and is riſen again, and ſitteth at God's right hand, to make interceſſion for us.* By death indeed he *purchaſed redemption for us*, *Heb.* 9. 12. ſo as to *Right* and *Title*; but 'tis this that gives us *Poſſeſſion* of the *Purchaſe*, with *Livery* and *Seiſin*: And by it *he is able to ſave*

to

to the uttermoſt, *Heb.*7.25. In the Original it is εἰς τὸ παντελές, *i. e.* actually, fully, and finally, that being the very *Laſt Act* and *Complement* of his *Mediatorſhip*: Nay, ſuch is his power and intereſt with the Father, that one Word out of his Mouth, which he *ſhall ſay*, ſhall be more than all that we *can do* to ſave.

Fifthly, In the Exerciſe of Faith, ply not only the *Promiſes*, which are deſign'd for Divine *Cordials*, to give *ſtrong Conſolation* to *weak* and *fainting Patients*, *Heb.* 6. 18. but alſo your *Experiences*, each whereof beareth a *Probatum*. Thus did *Aſaph*, *Pſal.* 77. 6, 7, 10. *His ſoul made diligent ſearch*: He ranſack'd into every corner of his heart, to ſee what there he could find: Nay, he conſidered the *days of old times, and the days of the right hand of the Almighty*, when things went not ſo *aukard and ſiniſter*: And he remembred *his former Songs* in his gloomy Nights. So *Jonah*, in the Dungeon of the great *Deep*, when his *Head* and *Faith* too were almoſt under water; *Yet will I look again towards thy holy Temple*, Direct. 5.

Temple, *Jonah* 2. 4. He had ſeen ſomething once there that ſatisfied, and hopes for the like ſight again.

Sixthly, *Recruit* your Faith ever and anon by *Repentance*: for Faith and Repentance ſtrengthen each other by mutual Recruits. Reſt not therefore in that *Soliſidian Perſwaſion*, that Faith of it ſelf *will do all*, and that it hath left Repentance *Nothing at all to do*; for you your ſelves find it daily *work enough to do* by your *Miſ-doings*: and Faith it will not, cannot do without it, as that famous Scripture imports, *Matth.* 21. 32. The *Phariſees* ('tis ſaid), for their parts, *did not repent*, *that they might believe*: All Impenitents, indeed, being *Unbelievers*. We would think thoſe *Seamen* rather *Mad men*, who when the Veſſel hath *ſprung a Leak*, fly to their *Anchor*. The Anchor is an Anchor in truth, and ſuch is this *Sacred Anchor* of Faith or Hope (ſo called, *Heb.* 6. 16.) but when the Soul hath *ſprung a Leak*, it is not that Anchor alone that will *keep* you ſafe, unleſs you ply the Pump alſo.

Direct. 6.

†

Se-

Seventhly, Whatever be your growth in the *knowledge of Chriſt*, ſee that it be an uniform growth; and whilſt you grow *upward* in knowledge, that you grow *downwards* in humility; for it's that which rooteth Faith: otherwiſe you are like Trees of much Top and little Root, in danger daily of being over-topped and overturned too: It is therefore ſaid of that Vital Seed of Faith, *It took root downwards, and brought forth fruit upwards:* And of *Iſrael*'s growing, the Prophet ſpeaks, *Hoſea* 14. 5. *They ſhall grow as Lillies*, and not only *ſpread* their *branches*, but *caſt forth their roots alſo as Cedars in Lebanon.* Direct. 7.

Eighthly, If you would grow up *unto* Chriſt, you muſt grow up *in* and *into* Chriſt, and make ſure your Union with him; all ſtrength in the Members is derived from the Head, both in the Natural and Myſtical Body. Let but that Communion of Spirits, and Animal Influences, be intercepted and intercluded, and they are purely paralytick, weak, and as dead: Nay, if a Bone be but *diſjoynted*, it hath no ſtrength at all; and there- Direct. 8.

therefore ſaith the Apoſtle expreſly; *Col.* 2. 19. *Chriſt is the head, from whom the whole body groweth up to him in all, and without me* (ſaith he himſelf), or [χωρὶς ἐμοῦ], *ſeorſim à me*, ſevered from me; *ye can do nothing*, but are like Branches broken off from the Vine, which ſoon die, dry, and are withered, *John* 15. 5.

Direct. 9. *Ninthly*, Be deeply ſenſible of your own weakneſs, if you deſire to be ſtronger; and of the frailty of your Faith, as well as Nature. It is a rare Lecture which is read us by the Prophet, *Iſa.* 40. 31. *The youths ſhall faint, and the young men utterly fail.* And why *Young Men?* Theſe are ſtrong, and more likely to hold out than others. *Ariſtotle* in his Rhetorick, expoundeth beſt this Problem of the Prophet, in giving us this Character of Young Men, *They are* (ſaith he) *bold, raſh, daring and confident, truſting to their own ſtrength; they think they can do* any thing, *when indeed they can do* nothing. Now ſuch are ſure to be foyled, and fooled too, as was St. *Peter*, ſelf-confident of his own Courage, *Matth.* 26. 35. when yet a

poor Damſel put his *Faith* to the *foyl.* But on the other hand, ſuch as truſt in God alone, ſhall not *moult*, but renew their *Plumes*, and their ſtrength too, like *Eagles*, which are ſaid to renew their Youth. And this expoundeth St. *Paul's* Paradox, 2 *Cor.* 12. 10. *When I am weak, then am I ſtrong:* And this is the *Reverſe*, *When I am ſtrong, then am I weak:* And the Reaſon is given in the Verſe before: God's *ſtrength is perfected in our weakneſs.*

Tenthly, To keep you the more ſtead- Direct. 10.
dy and humble ſtill, improve the *Providences* of God, by labouring for a ſanctified uſe of all *Sufferings.* The Captain of our Salvation was this way made perfect, *Heb.* 2. 10. And St. *Peter* prays on behalf of his Friends, 1 *Pet.* 5. 10. *That God, after they had ſuffered a little while, would ſtrengthen them, and make them perfect.* Bones cruſhed and bruiſed, if after carefully ſet, are the ſtronger for being broken. And the like may be ſaid of ſinnings as well as ſufferings; for both theſe are like ſome *Sickneſſes*, which falling upon the weak and tender, make them after

to ſhoot up, and grow the faſter. Thus St. *Peter* recovered and converted, had ſtrength for himſelf and others too, *Thou when thou art converted, ſtrengthen thy Brethren*, Luke 22. 32. Such really are Morals to the Poets Fable of the great Gyant *Anteus*, who every time he was caſt down to the earth, roſe with redoubled vigor after.

Laſtly, Let us join to all theſe Forces, that laſt truth in the Text which here falls in moſt fitly to bring up the rear, *viz.*

> *That Prayer* is the moſt proper and uſeful Expedient to promote this growth in Faith; *O Lord increaſe our Faith*, prayed the Apoſtles.

For Faith it ſelf, as omnipotent as it ſeems to be, without Prayer, is *Impotent*; as appeareth in that fam'd inſtance, *Mat.* 17. 21. wherein the Apoſtles in their Miſſion, had this *Commiſſion* under the *Broad Seal* of Heaven to caſt out Devils, and that *Faith* of *Miracles* was given with a *Promiſſion* alſo to exert that Power: yet one poſſeſſed of a Devil,

vil, was brought to Chriſt, whom they in vain attempted to *exorciſe* and diſpoſſeſs; Chriſt chides them for it, and calls them *faithleſs*; but why *faithleſs*? and why could they not caſt the Devil out? The Maſter anſwereth the Queſtion, Becauſe they had been Prayerleſs; Becauſe (ſaith he) *ſuch kind of Devils are not caſt out without Prayers and Faſtings*; therefore increaſe your Faith by Faſting, and ſharpen it by fervent Prayer, if you would have it puiſſant indeed; and what St. *James* ſaith of Faith and Works co-working in *Abraham*'s caſe, I may ſay of this *lovely pair* which are not to be parted, *Seeſt thou not how Faith worketh with Prayer?* This is as Broth unto the Phyſick that ſets it on working; yet are we not to aſcribe this efficacy to our own Prayers ſolitarily, but ſocially, as in Conjunction and Aſſociation with that *omne-prevalent* Interceſſion of Chriſt, for that is *ad corroborandum*, when Satan cometh to ſift Souls, and *winnow* them (and to be ſure he winnoweth when the wind is in the Barn-door, when he hath the faireſt advantages for his Temptations).

It mattererh not ſo much *what we pray*, as what our Saviour doth, *I have prayed that thy Faith ſhall not fail*, (ſaid he to *Peter*) Luke 22. 31.

However let it ſuffice that the Spirit aſſerteth the Prevalency of Prayer in this particular, *James* 5. 16. The effectual *Fervent Prayer of the Faithful availeth much*; it was therefore St. *Paul*'s expedient to corroborate his *Epheſians*, and to *ſtrengthen them with all might in the inner man*; he bowed his knees for them, *Epheſ.* 4. 6. when their knees were ſtiff, and would not bend. Nay, the Apoſtles of the Lord knew this to be the old means which is ſtrong indeed, praying, *O Lord increaſe our Faith*: So that without this, Faith at beſt will be as feeble as *Sampſon* when he lacked his Locks.

Now this *ſealeth up the Sum* both of our Firſt, Second, and Third Obſervation, (and adjuſteth the whole moſt exactly. But becauſe this laſt is ſo popular a Theme, and would lead us off our ſubject of Faith, to that other Common-place of *Prayer*, therefore I ſhall not further *follow* or purſue it; for this were

were to *change* the *Game* or *Scent*, on which we firſt ſet out.

SECTION IV.

THE Text having abundantly *treated us* with Firſt, Second, and Third Courſe in the Threefold Truths thereof, here is only place for the *Deſert* in the laſt, to entertain us with; and that is a word by way of Reflection upon the whole in General, and may ſerve for the Fourth Head. And as the All-wiſe Agent in his great Manufacture of the world, after all, reviewed his Six-days work to ſee if all were well; ſo give leave to a worſe Workman in his little Syſtem, after all, to reviſe his four days work; to ſee that all be right and well, by way of reflection; which is the more adviſeable, becauſe there are ſome things which meet theſe Truths with a drawn Sword of *Oppoſition*, (as the Angel did *Balaam*) and would not only diſmount them, but overthrow both the weak 4th Part.

and ſtronger Faith, and bereave poor Chriſtians of the Comforts of them both; therefore we turn from the Practical to the *Caſuiſtical* part; and have to offer this Fourth General by way of *Reſolution* to thoſe Scruples and Objections, which uſually afflict the Peace and Repoſe of the tender Conſciences of the Faithful, who really all the while believe, and may ſay, *Lord we believe, help our unbelief*; and thus pray, *O Lord increaſe our Faith.*

Object. 1. 'I. One complaineth, I have no ſenſe 'or feeling in my Soul, of any Faith 'there; and *Seeing, we ſay, is Believing.*

Reſol. 1. *Reſp.* 1. That ſaying in vogue is anti-maxim'd by a truer ſaying of the faithful Witneſs, *Seeing is not Believing*, Rom. 8. 24, 25. *Hope that is ſeen, is not hope, for what one ſeeth, why doth he yet hope for it?* Nay, Faith is the *evidence of things not ſeen, Heb.* 11. 1. The Juſt are ſaid to *live by Faith, Hab.* 2. 4. not *feeling.* And *we walk by Faith, and not by ſight*, 2 *Cor.* 5. 7. And tho it be not a warm ſcent only, but a view that Faith runneth, in its eager purſuit,

that

that view is not to the carnal but ſpiritual eye of Faith; Men truly live as to the life of Nature and Grace too (as in Swoons and Apoplexies when ſenſe is ſtunn'd) and yet have no feeling at all in ſuch *Paroxiſms*, that they either are *living*, or *in being*, (tho others may perceive it by them); therefore *not-feeling* is no good Argument of *Not-being*. Yet thou art a *God and Saviour too, that hideſt thy ſelf* (could the Prophet ſay, *Iſa.* 45. 15.) And Chriſt (tho under that dereliction) could yet ſay, *My God, why haſt thou forſaken me?*

Reſp. 2. Tho ſuch Patients diſcern it not themſelves, yet others the while do well perceive it by them, that they are living; by the ſtiller beatings in their hands, and Pantings, and Pulſations in their hearts, and by their inſenſible breathings too; neither are they ſo ſtiff and inflexible, ſet, and bent on Iniquity, as the ſpiritually-dead are; ſo that life may be ſeen in them, tho it cannot be ſeen or felt by them. Reſol. 2.

Reſp. 3. Tho ſuch perceive not the ſpirit of life ſtirring in them in a way of Senſe, Comfort, and Conſolation, which is the reflex-act, yet Reſol. 3.

they may feel it in a way of *Inward Strength, Corroboration, and Suſtentation*; wherein God anſwers ſometimes the Prayers of the faithful, as he did *David*, Pſal. 138. 3. *Thou anſwereſt me by ſtrength in my Soul*; which Anſwer giveth Anſwer to this ſcruple alſo; for ſo did God anſwer St. *Paul*, *My Grace is ſufficient for thee*, 2 Cor. 12. 9. *Reſp.* 4. There are other Graces which are of Faith's Followers and Retinue, which ſpeak Faith to be living, and living there alſo; it is not difficult to divine, that ſuch a Noble Perſonage liveth in ſuch an houſe, tho he doth not publickly appear, by thoſe his *Retainers*, or ſuch as wear his *Livery*, going in and out continually; and ſuch as obſerve thoſe gracious words and expreſſions which paſs out of the doors of their lips, and thoſe ſweet Affections that ſally out of their hearts continually, and thoſe *vital Truths* which *enter*, and have ſuch *free acceſs* unto them by their open *Ears*, may more than gueſs, that Chriſt and his *Spirit live within* of a certain, and that there they dwell, keep *houſe* and *Reſidence*. *Reſp.* 5. Therefore ſenſe is

Reſol. 4.

Reſol. 5.

no

no competent Judg of Faith at the beſt, for theſe two are of oppoſite factions, 2 *Cor.* 5. 7. and the Animal-man by the beſt help of his ψυχή, or natural ſoul, cannot judg of what is ſpiritual (no more than the blind can judg of Colours), for ſuch are ſpiritually to be diſcerned; and he wanteth that diſcerning faculty, ſee 2 *Cor.* 2. 14.

'2. *Object.* O but (ſaith another) 'I have not thoſe *vital Operations* which 'flow from life; and that ſaving is called, *Faith of the Operation of God*, Col. 2. 12. and *operatio ſequitur eſſe*, opera-'tion indicates the Eſſences of things, 'therefore Faith is not, becauſe it acts 'not, operates not vigorouſly as in other 'Believers. *Reſp.* 1. Some acts and operations, both of the ſpiritual and natural life, may be interrupted and held in ſuſpence for a time, as in Apoplecticks. 2. Thoſe Operations may not be ſo vigorous in ſome as they are in others. The Apoſtle ſpeaks of a meaſure of faith, *Epheſ.* 4. 7, 12. or a certain degree of it, that is given to each; the ſame is not given to all; you may not

Object. 1.

Reſol. 1.

not find thoſe ſtronger operations of it perhaps, but find you not ſome workings of it in your ſouls, according to the ſtation you bear in the Body of Chriſt? Which the Apoſtle calls the effectual *working in every part.* The ſpirit of man worketh not in the little finger to the ſame ſtrength and vigor that it doth in the arm; neither acteth it in the eye as it doth in the ear; and ſhall therefore the eye ſay, I have no ſoul nor life in me, becauſe I cannot hear as the ear doth? Or it is not with me as with other parts of the body. And yet for all this, the ſoul is *wholly in the whole, and wholly in every part*, ſaith the Philo-

Reſol. 3. ſopher. *Reſp.* 3. There may be leſs motion and activity in thoſe Infirm ones, and yet as much heart, and good will, and reality, as in thoſe that ſeem more ſtrong; for natural Infirmity may hinder ſuch activity. The Horſe-man may be good, and yet mounted on a tired Horſe, and may not be able to ride Poſt to Heaven, as others have done. If the Oyl in the Natural Lamp be waſted, it is no wonder if the light grow dim; and Grace doth but ſympathize with Nature, when declining.

'3. O

'3. O but ſtill the troubled ſoul 'preſſeth on with *Martha*'s complaint 'upon him, *John* 11. 21. *Lord, if thou 'hadſt been here, my Brother had not died*; 'if Chriſt were in me by that living 'Faith, it would be more lively, I ſhould 'not be ſo dead in Spiritual Duties; I 'never come, alas, to Chriſt, but am 'merely driven either by extremities of 'body, or preſſing neceſſities of ſoul. Object. 3.

Reſp. 1. It is one thing to live or be alive, not dead; and another thing to be lively and active. Faith may live, as Hope may live, yet not be a lively Hope, as the Apoſtle calls it. Reſol. 1.

Reſp. 2. Came the Woman of *Canaan* in the Goſpel, unto Chriſt purely drawn; or rather, was ſhe not driven and neceſſitated? Her Daughter (alas) was grievouſly vexed with a Devil; and yet her Faith was as great a Faith, as was her Miſery and Neceſſity, in Chriſt's unerring Judgment; for ſaith he in the caſe, *O woman, great is thy faith.* Reſol. 2.

'4. O but I am a vile and great Sin- 'ner, an impure Creature; and will 'Pre- Object. 4.

'cious Faith or Hope harbour in ſuch an
Reſol. 'heart, under ſo mean a *roof?* Let the Apoſtle *Paul* anſwer you, the chief of Sinners, the Plague and Perſecutor of the Primitive Chriſtians; Did ever Chriſt reject the vileſt of men, if once ſelf-convinced? The woman of *Canaan* was a reputed *Dog*; *It is not lawful to give the childrens meat to dogs* (ſaid Chriſt); but withal he added, *Woman great is thy Faith*; and accepted her, a *great Sinner*, for a *Grand Believer*.

Object. 5. '5. O but I perceive it not by my 'Growth at all, or my increaſe in Faith; 'I am no ſtronger than before; the very 'ſame Temptations ſtill overturn me, 'and I am but where I was many years 'ſince; now Life is a Vital Principle 'attended with growth, and ſure this
Reſol. 1. 'vital Principle of Faith I lack. *Reſp.* 1. Growth (alas) is as often inſenſible, as life it ſelf. It's ſaid of the good Seed in the Parable, the owner waited, *and it grew up he knew not how*, Mark 4. 27. The *little Children* of God, ſometimes know no more how they do grow, than do Children in the womb; and this

this is more than the moſt growing and knowing always know; ſo that the Preacher's Queſtion may puzzle ſuch to a *nonplus*, Eccl. 11. 5. *Doſt thou know how the bones do grow in her that is with Child?* and ſo (ſaith he) is the way of the Spirit, that is, as to the new Birth. *Reſp.* 2. All living things do not grow alike, ſome ſhoot up very timely, for it's ſaid of the *Coloſſians*, Col. 1. 6. *They grew fruitful from the very time they heard the truth firſt*; and truly thoſe that have but a *Temporary* Faith, for a time out-do the beſt Believers ordinarily: for it's ſaid of the Seed that fell by the way-ſide, *where there was no depth of earth*, it was but as ſoon up as down, it never came to perfection, Mat. 13. 5. And thus *Jonah* his Gourd, as great as it grew to be an Arbor for the Prophet, was but the Son of one night, *Jonah* 4. 10. and ſuch are *Muſhrooms*, but they are *ſine radice*; Others again grow more ſlowly and leiſurely; thus *Bulruſhes* ſhoot faſter up than *Oaks*, yet grow not to the ſize nor ſolidity of ſuch; The Moon runs its Circuit in a Month, about the Heavens, which

Reſol. 2.

which the Sun is a whole year a riding in its Solar Courſe; but yet theſe two are not to be compared for Bulk, Light,

Reſol. 3. and Influences of life. *Reſp.* 3. As the Plants of Righteouſneſs do not all grow alike, ſo neither are they all of the like *growth* and height; in Gods Herbal there is an Herb, a Tree, a Frutex, and Sub-frutex: Plants of ſeveral ſizes and ſorts are in his Garden, and all thoſe do live, grow, and flouriſh too. The Violets are lower, but *ſweeter than the Lillies in their*

Reſol. 4. *glory.* *Reſp.* 4. Some err in their own height and growth, and miſs it in their meaſure in meeting by falſe Standards. As 1. Some meaſure themſelves by others that are of much greater growth, and becauſe they are not as great as they, they think they do not grow at all; and this is as if a Child ſhould meaſure his height by a young *Plane*-Tree that grows faſter than himſelf, and thinks he grows not, becauſe he is ſtill but upon the ſame gage, not conſidering the Plant groweth as well as the Perſon. 2. Others meaſure themſelves by themſelves, and ſuch are not wiſe, (ſaith the Apoſtle, 2 *Cor.* 10. 12.) for they may miſs

miſs it that way. Thoſe who would know how they improve in writing, muſt not compare their preſent writing with their preſent writing, nor yet with their preſent Copy (for the better they write, to be ſure their Maſter ſets them ſtill the better Copy, diſplaying before them the Law in greater Spirituality and perfection) but they muſt compare their laſt Writings with their firſt writings, and they will perceive with the Church of *Thyatira*, *that their laſt things are more than the firſt*, Revel. 2. 10. *Reſp.* 5. Neither is growth to be meaſured by thoſe acceſſary Graces of Joy and inward Raviſhments, but to be eſtimated by thoſe principal and ſubſtantial ones, as Faith, Love, and Humility; otherwiſe *Herod* might grow faſter than his Maſter *John* the *Baptiſt*, for he *heard him with Joy. Mark.* 6. 20. Reſol. 5.

And ſo Temporaries out-do ſound Believers *Matt.* 13. 5. the latter may be in the increaſe, when the former are in the waine; theſe like *Honey-Moons* in the new eſpouſed, may not continue all the year, and are liker to Fairs than conſtant markets; or the firſt like blooms may fall

fall off, and yet the better fruit may be coming on for all that; the ſtuff may be good and ſtrong, and laſting, yet may it have loſt it's gloſs, and it is no whit the worſe for wearing. The old vial or inſtrument may be as ſweet as ever, and yet have loſt the *Varniſh.* The Lame newly cured *Acts* 3. 8. *Acts* 14. 10. (it's ſaid) *leaped* and exulted more; and they did not (ſurely) leap all their lives, but could go yet as faſt forwards all their days notwithſtanding; nay (as ſome well obſerve) faith may be more *increaſed* by the *decreaſe* of theſe Temporary *Elevations*, becauſe it is more exerciſed in pure *Truſting*. The caſting away the *Bladders* makes the learner ſwim the ſtronglier, becauſe it makes him to exerciſe his ſwimming more. *Reſp.* 6. Young Chriſtians can often muſter up a greater Hoſt of Youthful affections, but theſe often prove mercenary, and fall off; and ſuch mixed Affections are like the mixed Multitude that came out of *Egypt*, *Numb.* 11. 4. as forward as they were for ſetting out, they were for going backward; when the Novelty ceaſed, their Sincerity

Reſol. 6.

rity was ſoon diſcovered; and do we not ſee, that when a fire is but newly lighted, it yields more light and blaze, and the ſmoke fills the whole room, but the Fire ſtill grows hotter and purer, tho it contract into a leſſer Flame; and yields much more heat after. *Reſp.* 7. Others meaſure by Duties and Exerciſes; they grow not, improve not in them; *They go not forwards, therefore they go backwards,* (as ſaid the Prophet, *Jerem.* 1. 20.) Did not *Moſes* hear all Cauſes at the firſt, that came before him? but this courſe was not to be beholden long, as his Father told him, *he ſhould fade away as a leaf, and ſoon fall off,* Exod. 18. 18. And therefore he grew more cool therein; he diſmiſſed leſſer things, and reſerved himſelf ſolely for greater ſervices, 'tis ſaid. And did not the Holy Apoſtles ſo, in quitting Tables to ſerve the Goſpel, *Acts* 6. Children, whilſt they are little, eat often a day; when yet men that are grown much ſtronger, can ſuffice themſelves with two meals, Morning and Evening Repaſts. St. *Paul*, at his firſt converſion, in Praying was more than ever in his whole life after, Reſol. 7.

(as far as we can read), for he prayed whole days and nights, *Act.* 9. yet after he was much more in Preaching, *labouring more than all the Apoſtles*, 1 Cor. 15. 10.

Therefore let me conclude this with *David's* Conſolatory words, the laſt *Cordial* that he took when dying 1 *Sam.* 23. 5. one would think his evening ſhould be *without Clouds*, but this was not *David's* caſe, his days were *overcaſt* and *Clouded* much. *Abſolom* was *wicked*, *Ammon* and *Adonijah* no better, he ſaw not his family flouriſh nor grow, yet the Covenant of Promiſe for it all was good notwithſtanding; thou haſt made with me an everlaſting Covenant though in all things I ſee it not now to grow: and every Saint of Grace may ſay the like as to the Covenant of Grace.

object 6. '6. Oh, but I have many fears and doubtings, and am affrighted with *Rebec-* '*ca*, who after ſhe conceived of the pro- 'miſed Seed, finding the Twins ſtruggling 'in her womb, ſhe feared the worſt, and 'ſaid, *if it be ſo, why am I thus?* Gen. 25. 22. 'and it is ſo with me, by reaſon of Faith 'and

and fear conflicting within, ſo ſhall I fear *Miſcarrying*. *Reſp.* 1. fears (as was ſaid) are foes or back-friends to faith, greatly waſt, and ſpend upon it's incomes to the *Impoveriſhing* it's *Comforts*; yet faith the while may live, and have to *ſubſiſt* upon; none cometh to me (ſaid Chriſt) except the father draw him, *John.* 6. Now every Soul, that is under the attractive power of God, and influences of his Grace, is like the needle in the *Mariners Compaſs*, which is touched with a *Loadſtone*, though it *ſhake* and *tremble*, varying this way and that, it is all the while drawing nearer and nearer God-wards, it's pointing to it's *Polar*, and making ſtill towards him for all its quaverings. And was not the like diſcernable in that Poor Patient, *Luk.* 8. 47. for ſhe had got ſuch a *Touch of Chriſt* that he perceived this *Magnetick-Virtue* to be gone from him, ſaying, *Who hath touched me*? The poor creature, fearing the worſt, draws near to Chriſt, *trembling* (it's ſaid,) yet was ſhe healed; ſo that Chriſt may be an healing Chriſt, when yet the ſoul is a *fearing* and *trembling ſoul*; ſuch being more afraid than hurt. Reſol. 1.

Reſol. 2. *Reſp.* 2. As to doubtings, theſe ſaid a holy man (of great authority) they are as *Thiſtles*, and *ill weeds*, which moſtly *infeſt fat* and *good grounds*; the moſt *Soyls*, barren of Graſs ſhoot not much up with theſe; and doubtleſs their faith is much to be *doubted of*, who have none of theſe *Doubtings*; it is only that full Plerophory, ſuch as *Abraham* had *Rom.* 4.20. which prevents all ſuch Staggerings, and raiſeth the ſoul above that ſphere of *trepidation*; but, we the little Children of *Abraham*, and leſs then the leaſt, are not arrived at our fathers ſize and growth, and therefore cannot walk ſo ſtrongly, but we ſhall ſometimes ſtagger, ſtumble, nay, fall by the way; and yet we may not fall from the right way (as the Pſalmiſt ſpeaks:) and for one to ſay I have no faith becauſe of doubtings, is, as if one ſhould ſay, in a dark day, it is not day but night, becauſe tis overcaſt with clouds and darkneſs. Now theſe Thiſtles are tribulations indeed, truly afflictive, ſuch doubts are *diſtractive* to the comforts and *well-being*, but not *deſtructive* to the *being of* faith, they ſpeak (I confeſs) the leſs faith, and the minority of it,

but

but not the *no-faith* or abſolute *nullity* of it, as our Saviours words to the fearful intimate; wherefore did you fear *O ye of little faith.*

'7. Oh but (ſaith the ſeventh) I am not 'ſufficiently humbled by Repentance, 'ſo as yet to believe; and ſuch a repen-'tance is preceeding to faith, *Mat.* 21. 31. 'It's ſaid the Phariſees, that heard *John* 'his lectures of repentance, yet repented 'not, that they might believe. By 'which Paſſage, faith cometh not by hea-'ring only, but ſeems to be the product 'of *Pœnitential* preaching, and of the '*grains* of *Grace* which the *ſower* goeth 'forth to *ſow*, it is the *Prime* the *Principal* 'Wheat as culled, *Iſa.* 28. 27. But who 'is he that ſoweth it, till firſt the '*fallow ground of the heart be ploughed up?* *Jer.* 4. 3. Nay, the Earth is not ploughed 'only, but firſt prepared, *Manured*, *Mel-'lowed* and *Fallowed*, ere he caſt in this 'principal Wheat (for who can expect 'to reap much from a ſingle *Ardour*, or 'once ploughing?) and in all theſe the 'Husbandman is inſtructed of God, ſaith 'the place. But alas, I have long laid *fal-* Object. 3.

'*low*

'*low*, ſo that my ſoul is overrun with 'noiſom weeds; mine hard heart is not 'throughly rent and torn (the *Clods* 'being not broken) it is not throughly '*haraſſed* and humbled, it is but *new-* '*rift*, and hath not paſſed this courſe of '*Cultivation*, or through *Humiliation*; 'and therefore this Principal Seed, be-'ſure is not yet *ſown*. And ſome have 'ſaid that *faith* is a *flower which groweth* 'upon the very *brink* of the lake that 'burns with fire and brimſtone, for God 'uſually doth lead his Saints by the gates of Hell to Heaven.

Reſol. 1. *Reſp.* 1. It's true, indeed, that many precious ſouls have been caſt down to Hell ere God raiſed them up to the Third Heavens, as *Heman* in the Old-Teſtament, and St *Paul* in the New: God exceedingly humbled, and as much hammered that precious veſſel which he ordained for a choſen veſſel of more eminent uſe and ſervice; beſides great ſinners and Perſecutors are thus practiſed upon; and ſuch as are appointed to ſit at the eaſieſt *Rents* after, do pay at firſt the *higheſt fines*. But God (who is a voluntary agent) is not tyed up to

to the ſelf-ſame meaſure in meeting unto all; for in the ſame *Chap. Act.* 16. 19. 37. He who knocked down a ſturdy Jaylor, did deal more gently with one of a tenderer make; he *broke* not, ſo much as *opened* the doors of the heart of *Lydia*; neither do men uſe the ſame means and methods in threſhing out of differing Grains, *Iſ.* 28. 27. *The fitches are not threſhed with a threſhing inſtrument, nor the Cart-wheel turned upon the ſmaller Cummin*; (this would bruiſe all to pieces) but the one is *beaten out with a ſtaff, the other with a ſmaller rod*; but *bread-corn is bruiſed*, and grounded to powder; and if God inſtruct the Countryman to diſcretion, *v.* 26. he himſelf is not to teach, who *is wonderful in counſel, and excellent in working*, verſ. 29. Reſol. 2.

Reſp. 2. Who can ſay (I pray) that he is ſufficiently humbled, *and who is ſufficient for theſe things?*

Reſp. 3. Hath the Holy Scripture ſet Reſol. 3. ſuch a quantity or meaſure of Humiliation, ſaying, *Hither ſhalt thou go, and no further?* the mighty Ocean indeed hath ſuch a Bound, but there is no ſuch [*minimum quod ſic*] in this Grace, ſuch

a meaſure or quantity preſcribed; if there be ſo much as will truly *work* to *ſelf-emptying*, it may ſuffice.

Reſol. 4. *Reſp.* 4. That we ſay is ſufficient which is ſufficient to its end; now it is not tormenting, but ſelf-abaſing, that God deſigneth; he puts not any upon the Rack of Torture or Grief for Grief's ſake (for then he were leſs gracious) no, *He doth not willingly afflict the children of men*, Lament. 3. 33. but he doth it for more gracious ends: and this repentance unto Faith, purifying the heart, is as pulling off a Glove, and bareing the hand firſt, in order unto waſhing it; it cleanſeth not, but is in order to cleanſing rather: Now, if Sin and Self be made loathſome, and thereby the Soul ſelf-emptied and purged to make room for Faith, and the Reception of Chriſt, God hath done his work, and gained his Point.

Reſol. 5. *Reſp.* 5. Let me add. Humiliation, though a Condition, is neither the ground nor foundation of Faith and Juſtification, or our acceptation; (this is free Grace alone, and no other preparatory qualification whatſoever;) and

ſince

ſince Faith *ſtandeth not* on this ground or bottom, why ſhould it *ſtumble* at it?

8. *Object.* 'Oh, but if I had great 'Faith, I ſhould be able to do great '*things*, the *Modus operandi*, or man-'ner of working, following the manner 'of being; for, *as a man is, ſo is his* '*ſtrength*, ſaid he to *Gideon*, *Judg.* 8. 'Nay, Chriſt ſaith, the leaſt grain of 'that Grace *will remove Mountains*, 'Matth. 17. 20. Object. 8.

Reſp. 1. As to that miſtaken Scripture, know, that this was but a Temporary Promiſe given to his Diſciples at one time in their firſt miſſion, and the Broad-ſeal of their Commiſſion; not a ſign of their Saintſhip, but Apoſtleſhip; as St. *Paul* calls the like, 2 *Cor.* 12. 12. and it related unto the Faith of Miracles: which (as high as it looks) amounts but to a Temporary Faith, and is much below this Juſtifying Faith. St. *John Baptiſt*, greater *than whom was not one born of women*, could not yet do *any Miracles* ('tis ſaid, *John* 16. 41.) And Grace working to the ſaving and converſion of Reſol. 1.

of Souls is a greater Faith than this of Miracles in Christ's unerring Judgment, *John* 14. 12. *He that believes in me, shall do greater works than any he sees me do when I go to my Father*, saith he. And how was this verifyed after his Ascension, for his Apostles were never a match to him in Miracles; but in Oracles, and in preaching, they converted more Souls to Christ, than ever Christ had done at once, *Acts* 2. 41. upon *All-Souls* day (rather than *Pentecost*) there being three thousand Souls converted.

Resol. 2. *Resp.* 2. It's true indeed, Great things are ascribed to Faith, *Heb.* 11. 33. some conquered Kingdoms, some cured the dead and and impotent; some quenched the violence of Fires, and all this by Faith: yet observe, that betwixt these are incirculated [*obtaining the promises, and working righteousness*] in the center, as the marrow indeed, in the middle of all the rest. Now say, weak Believer, thou canst not conquer Kingdoms, as *Joshua* and *David* did; nor raise the dead, as *Elijah* and *Elisha* did; nor quench the violence of fire as the three Chil-

Children in *Daniel*; nor ſtop the mouths of Lyons, as *Daniel* did; nay, ſcarcely of Dogs from barking at thee; yet if that Faith that is in thee can *obtain the promiſes*, and receive and *work righteouſneſs*, this is enough, and more than all the reſt amounts to: And the leaſt Faith, that is of the true ſtamp, can do this; for the Righteouſneſs of God (which is the none-ſuch of all Righteouſneſs) is revealed from Faith to Faith, from the loweſt to the higheſt degree of it, *Rom.* 1. 17.

'9. *Object.* Oh, but true Faith is Object. 9.
'Peculiar to God's peculiar People, and
'is appropriated to God's Elect; there-
'fore called the Faith of God's Elect,
'*Tit.* 1. 1. Now I that have no grounds
'to aſſure me of mine Election (which
'is a ſealed ſecret) can have no cer-
'tain ground which my Faith can bot-
'tom on, that I am one of God's faith-
'ful ones, and this takes away the very
'*ſubſtratum* on which Faith ſtandeth.

Reſp. 1. True ſaving Faith (to cor- Reſol. 1.
rect this grand miſtake that flys ſo high) groundeth not on God's Election, or Secret

cret Decree (which belongeth to his *hidden Will*, and that belongs not to us) but on his Promiſſion and gracious Promiſes which appertain to his Revealed Will; *Heb.* 11. 13. all thoſe Faithful ones ('tis ſaid) embraced or cloſed with the *Promiſes*, it is not ſaid with the *Decrees* of God.

Reſol. 2. *Reſp.* 2. It is your Vocation, or effectual calling, that muſt enſure your Faith and Election too, ſaith St. *Peter*, 2 *Pet.* 1. 10. *Above all all things uſe diligence, to make your calling and election ſure.*

Reſol. 3. *Reſp.* 3. God's gracious Proclamation of Free-pardon and Grace, runs in the univerſal, *quicunque vult*, to all who can or will believe, *John* 3. 16. *God gave his Son, that whoſoever will believe in him, ſhall not periſh, but have everlaſting life.* The Learned *Epiſcopius* did ſo happily manage this Scripture at the Council of *Dort*, that our Reverend *Hales* hearing of him, bid thenceforth adieu to *John Calvin:* and yet I ſee no reaſon for it; both *Remonſtrants* and *Contra-Remonſtrants* muſt allow this for truth, without prejudice to Orthodox pro-

Profeſſion. Oh, but Election is ſaid to be under the Privy Signet of Heaven; *The Election of God ſtandeth ſure, having this ſeal, the Lord knoweth who are his*, 2 *Tim.* 2. 19. And, I pray, is not this Royal Proclamation under the Great Seal of Heaven too? therefore it concerneth all to cloſe with it, and to accept it, and to ſet to their Seals that it is true, and not diſpute God's Secret Decrees, Will or Intention, as if God really *purpoſed* no ſuch thing in the bottom as he propoſed and promiſed: for God, who is holy and true, will not be a Lyer to his Word and Promiſe: but to doubt or disbelieve upon the account of his Decree, is to make him a Lyer (as is ſaid, 1 *John* 5. 10.) *He that believeth not God, nor his Record, hath made him a Lyer.* Beſides, *Thoſe hidden things belong to God*; they are theſe *revealed things that belong to us*, Deut. 29. 29.

Reſp. 4. Let me infer and conclude; If you either can or will believe, there ſhall be nothing in that Decree of God which can bar you; ſuch is the cogency of the ſame Scripture, *John* 3. 16. And Reſol. 4.

And the Goſpel ſhuts no man out of Heaven, nor excludes any from that Pardon, or Free Grace of God, but ſuch as by unbelief do bar the door on the inſide againſt him; and the Spirit of God gives this as the alone bar and reaſon of non-entry, *Heb.* 4. 6. where it is not ſaid in the matter of that fatal Bill of Excluſion, that they entred not, becauſe of their being decreed to another Doom, but becauſe of their unbelief; ſo that Faith we ſee may ſtorm Heaven, and enter with a *non obſtante* to the Decree.

Object. 10. ‘ 10. *Object.* Oh, but I have not aſſu-
‘ rance, or not that Faith that is to aſſu-
‘ rance, and therefore have no Faith at
‘ all, but am under much unbelief.

Reſol. 1. *Reſp.* 1. There is an anticipation of this Objection in the explication of the nature of Faith, that aſſurance is not the *minimum quod ſic* of ſaving Faith, for if ſo, ſome good men may have no good Cards to ſhew for the Prize; nor is this of the eſſence of Faith, for that lieth in affiance, reliance and adherence; but the conſequence of it, as is clear from *Eph.* 1. 13.

Reſp. 2.

Reſp. 2. All mixtures of Infidelity make not Faith reprobate or refuſe; it may paſs as current Coyn and Sterling Money for all thoſe grains of Alloy which are allowed by the Standard, and therefore, notwithſtanding ſuch unbelief, Saints may ſay yet undoubtedly with him in the Goſpel, *Lord, I believe.* Reſol. 2.

Reſp. 3. Faith of Reliance may prove a firmer Faith in point of evidence, than that of aſſurance; for one man may have two ſtrings for the ſame Bow, and more Titles to the ſame Eſtate (as had *Henry* the Seventh to his Regality:) now I take Reliance to be the ſtronger of the two, for Adherence will be Adherence, and Reliance Reliance, when Aſſurance may not be Aſſurance; the one may be produced in evidence, when the other is not to be found: and if that Glew be the ſtrongeſt that cleaves the ſtrongeſt, then ſuch Faith is the ſtrongeſt Faith, becauſe *maximæ adhærentiæ*. Such adherence argueth the ſtrength of Sin, and why not of Grace? 'Tis known, that a drowning, dying man will not let go his hold (but with his life) of that which Reſol. 3.

which he lays hold of to ſave his life.

Reſolut.4. *Reſp.* 14. There may be a *certitudo Objecti & eventus*, where there is not *certitudo Subjecti*; the thing hoped for may be ſure in it ſelf, and prove ſure in the iſſue and event; and we may not yet be ſure of it. Divines therefore ſay, that Faith like to a foil, hath its fort and feeble Part; it may be ſtrong in the direct act, but weak in the reflex, which is in plain *Engliſh*, *Men may ſtrongly believe, and yet not ſtrongly believe that they do believe.*

Reſolut.5. *Reſp.* 5. But ſuppoſe all this an undoubted Truth, that no Aſſurance can be had; are Heaven and Glory, things ſo cheap and inconſiderable in your eyes, that they are not worth venturing for on mere poſſibility, tho there wanteth probability, much more certainty and aſſurance? Some have ventured Brains and Fortunes too for the Philoſopher's Stone, wherein was ſlender hope or probability of finding. And in this preſent juncture of time, How high do others adventure to retrieve thoſe Treaſures from the bottom of the Sea, ſunk fourty years ago; yet theſe may never ſee one peny of the

the purchaſe, nor yet of the Money which they lay out; but the Prize is great, and vaſt thoſe Treaſures, for which men are willing to venture lives and all, without enſurance.

11*thly*, *Object.* 'Oh, but my Faith 'faileth me in the main point in Reli-'ance it ſelf; I cannot rely on God, as 'I would and ſhould, and therefore have 'no Faith, or a very little Faith, ſince 'I rely ſo little on him. Object. 11

Reſp. 1. Chriſtians may truly rely on God, yet not find it neither, that they do rely upon him; a good Student may be intent and ſerious in his ſtudy, and yet not once think or dream of the Desk on which he leaneth all the while. Reſol. 1.

Reſp. 2. Chriſtians may rely upon God truly, and yet not at all times rely on him alike; the braveſt *Heroes* are not always Victorious, they have their good and evil days; ſometimes Faith is Maſter of the Field, ſometimes 'tis foiled and put to the Rout. Holy *Job* is ſometimes daring, *tho he kill me, yet will I truſt in him*; at other times diffident and even deſpairing. *David* that would Reſol. 2.

have taken a Lyon by the Beard once, and not have feared to encounter thousands of men ſingle, *Pſal.* 8. 3. you would think he was not the ſame Perſon, 1 *Sam.* 27. 1. he was afraid of a ſingle man, *I ſhall one day periſh by the hand of Saul*, (ſaid he) and could ſay, *fly*, *fly* from the face of *Abſolom*: St. *Paul* that was more than Conqueror, *Rom.* 8. 38. complains wofully as a Captive conquered, *Rom.* 7. 23, 24. *Miſerable man that I am:* St. *Peter* at one time ſees daring in danger, at another time crys out, *Maſter ſave, we periſh*; which ſhews that his Faith was as much under-water as his Head, and yet it was the ſame ſaving Faith all the while.

Object. 12 *Object.* 12. 'Oh, (but ſaith ſuch an 'one) I cannot rely on God for the 'things of this Life preſent; therefore 'to be ſure, I cannot truſt or rely on 'him for Eternal Life; he that cannot 'truſt one for a Trifle, will not truſt 'him for a Treaſure and Kingdom; and 'as God ſaid to the Prophet *Jeremiah* 12. '5. he that cannot hold pace *with foot-'men, will never hold out with horſe-men.*

'In

'In poſitive arguing we proceed *from* '*more to leſs*; in the Negative from leſs 'to more, as here,

Reſp. 1. Earth as well as Heaven is paſſed over to Believers, by the ſame Grant or Grand Covenant, (for Godlineſs hath *the Promiſes of this Life, and that which* is a better) and yet there are greater Reaſons for relying on God for theſe greater things, than theſe leſs. 1. Becauſe in theſe leſſer things, Senſe is a Party, and it bribing the Judge, proves a great Enemy to Faith; and ſenſible things more ſenſibly affect and preſs upon the Senſe; and Fleſh being ſo much concerned in the one, enfeebleth Faith the more. It cracks the Confidence of a good Bowler, when he hath too much upon the ſet and hazard. Take one that is by Nature of greateſt Courage, and hath been ever ſo reputed; yet when he is Married, and hath many little Children to cry after him (all whoſe Fortunes and Livelyhoods depend upon his Life) he grows much leſs bold and brave in high Adventures; this is the caſe of the Soul that is Married to the Body, it is too much concerned Reſol. 1.

in it, and for it; and this enfeebles Faith and Reſolution ſo much as to Temporals.

Reſol. 2. *Reſp.* 2. Temporal and Spiritual good things, tho they paſs by the ſame grand Covenant and Grant; yet paſs they not upon the ſame Grounds; they have the ſame *Title*, but hold not the ſame *Tenure*, for God paſſeth thoſe abſolutely, but theſe only conditionally, if God ſo pleaſe, and ſo they may be good; and if it *may go well with us in the land*; ſo the firſt Commandment with Promiſe runneth. And the Reaſons of this difference, are different; for the one reſpects the *Eſſe* or *Being*, and therefore is fixed to the *Free-hold*; but the other the *Bene-eſſe* or *Well-being*, and theſe are moveables; therefore *David* having ſinned, and repented, upon *Nathan's* Abſolution, [*the Lord hath put away thy ſin, thou ſhalt not dye*] might firmly believe as to this Spiritual Priviledg, the Remiſſion of his Sins: but he had not the ſame warrantable ground of Aſſurance for the *Remiſſion of his Puniſhment*, and the Proſperity of his Family as to Temporals in the ſame juncture, becauſe

God put an (*how be it*) in the Pardon; the *ſword ſhall not depart from thy houſe*, v. 14.

Laſtly, 'But ſaith one, true Faith 'groundeth on the Promiſes; but alas, 'I have not the Power to apply thoſe 'Promiſes. Obj. laſt

Reſp. 1. As to the *Grace-part*, it is the Spirit indeed that muſt apply the Plaiſter of the Promiſes, which are as *Salve* to a *wounded Soul*, and doth apply to us what ſhould be applied by us, and of us; but if we can but rely, the Spirit no doubt will apply, and help our Infirmities, as 'tis ſaid, *Rom.* 8. Reſol. 1.

Reſp. 2. As to the *Duty-part*, why cannot a Chriſtian be as wiſe as the *Mahometan*; for we read of *Mahomet*, that he made Vaunt and Boaſt of his Power of Miracles; he would undertake to command *Mecha* and the Mountain to come to him; but the Mountain was a Mountain indeed, (*a non movendo*) and would not move a jot, enough to daſh (one would think) his *Confidence* out of *Countenance*; but the falſe Prophet was not confounded at this, but Reſol. 2.

but reſumed Courage, ſaying, If the Mountain will not come to *Mahomet*, *Mahomet* would go to the Mountain; and ſo he moved, ſince the Mountain would not; and he that hales his Boat to the Rock, draws not the Rock to the Boat, but rather his Boat to the Rock. And if weak Souls cannot apply the Promiſes to themſelves, yet they may apply themſelves to the Promiſes, and the caſe is much the ſame. Whether the Cod-fiſh take the Hook, or the Hook the Cod-fiſh, ought not to be matter of Diſpute or Contention; (as it happened once to breed a Broil, 'tis ſaid, in the *Netherlands*); 'tis all one and the ſame thing, ſo long as the Fiſh is catched and hooked, it is ſafe; the Prize is got and won, that Faith playeth for. And let theſe Reſolves ſeal up all by way of Conſolation, (and be as Cordials to the weak in Faith) with the Apoſtle's Prayer,

1 Pet. 5. 10. *That the God of all Grace would make ſuch perfect, ſtabliſh, ſtrengthen, and ſettle them.*

FINIS.